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# The Warrior Medici.

Giovanni delle Bande Nere.



An Historical Study in Florence.

BY

Catherine Mary Phillimore.

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THE HISTORY OF THE

ROYAL SOCIETY OF LONDON



AND THE PROCEEDINGS THEREOF

FROM THE YEAR 1660 TO 1703

The Warrior Medici.

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Giovanni delle Bande Nere.



GIOVANNI DELLE BANDE NERE



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An Historical Study in Florence.

*From the  
"Archivio Storico" and original MSS. in the Magliabechiana Library.*

BY

Catherine Mary Phillimore.

*Writer of "Studies in Italian Literature," "The Life of Fra Angelico,"  
etc., etc., etc.*

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## Introduction.

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HE annals of the great House of Medici have already furnished materials for the pen of many a distinguished writer, and yet there still remain buried in the same almost inexhaustible mine a vast amount of literary treasures waiting to be sought out and brought to the light. From amongst these the subject of the following historical study has been selected for consideration, because "The Warrior Medici" stands alone in his special claim to the regard of posterity, a claim which deserves to be recognized on its own ground, though it does not challenge the immediate attention of the historian, like the statesmanship of Cosimo Pater Patriæ, or the dazzling splendour of Lorenzo Il Magnifico; nor indeed can it aspire to any merit connected with

the brilliant halo of literature and art which, owing to their consistent patronage, must ever radiate from the family name.

Yet, when viewed apart from these fascinating influences, how many an act of unscrupulous ambition, how many a dark intrigue has cast a shadow over the splendour of the Court of the Medici, while upon their family escutcheon lies the blot of many a hideous crime.

When compared with such records as these, the life of the "Warrior Medici," with its simple, soldierly code of honour, and its direct singleness of purpose, may present a most favourable contrast. Moreover, in an age when the virtues of private life were as lightly esteemed, and as easily set aside as the public honour of principalities and states, it has been a pleasing task to draw forth from the oblivion to which it has too long been consigned, the authentic memorial of the wisdom, courage, and devotion displayed for her warrior husband by Maria Salviati de' Medici, his beautiful and virtuous wife.

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For assistance in compiling the following brief memoir, the grateful acknowledgments of the writer are due, in the first instance, to S. E. Enrichetta Caetani Duchessa di Sermoneta, by means of whose introduction the writer gained access to the original sources whence it has chiefly been drawn; and, in the next place, to Il Signor Barone Podestà, librarian of the Magliabechiana Library, and keeper of the State Archives, for his courtesy in bringing the manuscripts within her reach, and for assisting her research among their manifold intricacies.

The writer is further greatly indebted for much valuable information to various biographies, and an edition of the famous "*Lettere di Principi*" (Venice, 1570), kindly placed at her disposal by the distinguished lawyer, L'Onorevole Senatore Corsi, while to Il Marchese Mario Covoni and Il Rev<sup>ssno</sup>. Canonico Anziani contributions of special interest are due, which are acknowledged in their respective positions in the biography.

The study was completed from The Archivio Storico Italiano, Nuova Serie, T. VII., parte II. ; Machiavelli Istorie Fiorentine ; Machiavelli, e I. Suoi Tempi, Pasquale Villari ; Guicciardini, Storia d' Italia ; Vasari, Scritti Minori ; and Roscoe's Life of Leo the Tenth.

C. M. P.

THE COPPICE,

HENLEY-ON-THAMES,

*August, 1887.*

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## THE WARRIOR MEDICI.

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“Giovanni delle Bande Nere.”

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“Quella dannosa e lacrimabil morte  
Del magnanimo Medice Giovanni  
D'Italia defensor vigile e forte  
Honor de 'larmi e gloria de 'nostri ani  
Le vitali fila sua fragili e corte  
Rotte per dar materia ai nostri danni  
S'empedito non son dal troppo pianto  
E lacrimando, e sospirando canto.”\*



T was an ingenious conceit of Leo the Tenth to describe the varying fortunes of the Medici family by the application of the motto, *Percussa resiliunt* (struck they rebound), to the balls which make the well-known insignia of his house.

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\* “Morte del fortissimo Signore Giovanni de' Medici. Padre del Ser Cosimo I. Gran Duca di Toscana.” *Da Giovanni Falugi dall 'Incisa.* A Contemporary Poem, printed at Venice, 1532.

The court painter, Vasari, seized upon the idea, and produced a design representing Envy, not "chawing a toad" as depicted by Spenser in the "Fairy Queen," but swallowing a viper.

The poisonous influence of the reptile compels Envy to dash the Medici balls upon the ground; but these, by their very nature, bound high in proportion to the violence with which they are cast down, and four of them, adorned with the insignia of Ducal and Regal Crown Cardinal's Hat and Papal Tiara, allegorically represent the influence of the House of Medici upon the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries.

This was the rebound from their fall in 1494, when anathematized by Savonarola, they fled from Florence, betrayed her fortresses to the foreign invader, and left the French monarch to enter the city in triumph, and occupy their vacant palace.

The elder branch of the house never really recovered the place they had thus forfeited in the esteem of the Florentines, and it was from the younger branch that the *Palle*, with vigorous re-



bound, were to gain a position of greater eminence than any they had hitherto occupied.

Between the old dynasty and the new, the line of demarcation is very plainly drawn. The palpable evidence remains for ever in the statue of Giovanni delle Bande Nere, the warrior destined to be the ancestor of the future Grand Dukes of Tuscany, who, with his sword drawn, and the cannon-ball at his feet, stands at the entrance of the Uffizi, and challenges the attention of the passer-by with a determination worthy of the soldier himself upon the battle field.

What is the inscription upon the sword ?

“Draw me not without a cause,  
Nor wield me without valour.”\*

And there is something in every line of the warrior's attitude which carries conviction that the latter half at all events of the soldierly watchword was fulfilled to the letter.

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\* “*Non mi snudare senza ragione,  
Non M'impugnare senza valore.*”

This conviction can also be made a certainty, for within a few paces of the statue lies the entrance to the Magliabechiana Library, and there are records still extant which can bid the dead warrior live again in the recollection of his country even more effectually than the skill of the sculptor without, or the master-hand of Titian within, the walls of Reale Galleria degli Uffizi.

In letters, which date from the age of twelve to the day before his death, we find the portrait of this remarkable man drawn by his own hand with vigorous strokes; the square, bold characters of the handwriting looking as if they had been cut with the point of the sword; the contents of the letters, many written on the battle-field itself, as brief and authoritative as the word of command to his troops.

Statue, painting, and curious characters, have a singular career to relate, but although clearly defined, it does not occupy much space upon the page of history, for not thirty summers had passed

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over that proud young head before it was laid low in the dust.

Yet, for one whose warrior instincts declared themselves from the very cradle, scarcely any consecutive score of years in all the troubled history of Italy could have been selected more adapted to the brief period of his military career.

The French monarchs, with their pretended claims, now upon Naples, now upon Milan, were importing a fresh element of disturbance into the already distracted state of Italy. Hardly had the last stragglers of the Neapolitan expedition, under Charles VIII., evacuated the country, than the French arms, under a new sovereign, appeared before Milan with a new pretext, in the perfectly fictitious claim of Louis XII. to the Duchy of Milan. But it mattered little to the reigning Pontiff, Alexander VI., whether the claim was valid or invalid, if it could be made to serve the insatiable ambition of Cesar Borgia, commonly called Duke Valentine; so a league was quickly formed with the French monarch, and while he

made an easy conquest of Milan, Duke Valentine continued his ravages of the Romagna, and fortified by a considerable body of French troops, laid siege to the fortress of Forli.

Here was the fitting cradle of the warrior Medici, Giovanni delle Bande Nere. He was then but a few months old.

The fortress of Forli and the city of Imola belonged to his mother, Caterina Sforza, in right of her first husband, Girolamo Riario, whose share in the Congiura de'Pazzi had been terribly avenged by his assassination, at the secret instigation of Lorenzo de' Medici.

On this occasion Caterina, his widow, refused to surrender the fortress to the murderers of her husband, and held out gallantly till succour arrived.

Contemporary history bestowed upon her the title of *l' Eroina del Secolo*; and now the second siege of Forli served to prove how well she deserved the appellation.

She was again a widow, having married in the

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interval Giovanni di Pier Francesco de' Medici,\* Ambassador from Florence to the Riario Lords of Imola and Forli, and Commissary for all the Florentine possessions in the Romagna.

He died, and their young son, the subject of this paper, who had been called Ludovico,† was given his father's name of Giovanni, to which his own exploits were destined afterwards to add a distinguishing epithet.

Meanwhile Caterina, his mother, was in a worse predicament than she had ever been before.

Her estates had become an object for the cupidity of Duke Valentine, that monster of the sixteenth century, whose name is a by-word for profligate vice; and the unbridled license of whose troops was, by a supreme abuse of spiritual power, absolved beforehand for any crime they might wantonly commit.

Desperate though her position was, she did not abandon her rocky fortress without a struggle.

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\*His portrait, painted by Vasari, forms one of the Medallions in the Sala del Signor Giovanni de' Medici—Palazzo Vecchio *Vasari*—*Scritti Minori*. Vol. viii. p. 186.

For some time she held out against the repeated assaults of her formidable foe, but at last, vanquished by the preponderance of the force against her, she was obliged to yield.

Taken prisoner, with her four Riario sons, and the young Giovanni, she succeeded in making her escape, but was recaptured, and then confined for eighteen months in the Castle of San Angelo.

She was at last released, chiefly owing to the representations of the captian of the French contingent of Duke Valentine's army, Ivo d' Allegri, who was moved by admiration of her heroic courage, and compassion for her sex, to interest himself in her behalf.

Catherina, thus set free, repaired to Florence, accompanied by the children of her first marriage, four sons and one daughter, and Giovanni, the only child of her second marriage with Giovanni di Pier Francesco de' Medici.

At Florence she was received with marked kindness by her husband's brother, Lorenzo, who

immediately placed her in possession of her husband's portion of the family wealth.

These two brothers, Lorenzo and Giovanni, sons of Pier Francesco de' Medici, were the younger branch of the house. Their father was the son of the "Elder Lorenzo," so called to distinguish him from "Il Magnifico," who was the brother of Cosimo Pater Patriæ.

These two brothers, Cosimo Pater Patriæ, and the "Elder Lorenzo" were always on friendly terms. They carried on together their extensive commercial speculations, and the results were distributed with strict impartiality; so that at the death of the elder Lorenzo, his son, Pier Francesco, inherited a sum of 255,000 florins.

While the wealth of the elder branch of the house, descended from Cosimo Pater Patriæ, was employed in supporting the hereditary dignity of the family in a manner which obtained for its representative the title of "Il Magnifico, Pier Francesco preferred a private life, and to incur neither praise for liberality nor blame for ostenta-

tious display. Thus, in the humble capacity of private citizens, his sons were allowed to remain in Florence after the fall of Piero de' Medici. Indeed, to pacify the exasperated people, they went so far as to relinquish their name, adopting that of Popolani instead; and removing from their residence the famous insignia of the *Palle*, by which they had so long been identified.

It was during this pause in the public fortunes of the house of Medici, while Piero de' Medici, foiled in three successive attempts to re-enter the city, paid the forfeit of his treachery by a life of perpetual exile, and while Piero Soderini, the *Gonfaloniere a vita*, laboured with conscientious diligence to keep up the name of a Republic, that Caterina arrived in Florence, but she almost immediately withdrew from it, with her allotted dowry, to Castello, a distance of two miles from the city.

In that peaceful retreat the first rudiments of learning were instilled into her young Giovanni, either by herself, or by some one of the classical



scholars who still lingered in Florence to bear testimony to the lettered age of Lorenzo Il Magnifico.

Their efforts were little appreciated by the embryo soldier, in whom the *animo guerriero, e spirti di riposo impazienti* became manifest from earliest childhood. This was barely passed when the mother reached the end of her chequered career, and closed her eyes on a world in which she had played her part with such conspicuous courage.

That her undaunted spirit had descended to her son, the tutors, Francesco Fortunati and Jacopo Salviati, to whose care he had been confided, soon found to their cost. Their pupil's delight was to ride the most fiery, indomitable horses; and soon a rumour reached them that he had been killed, *correndo il suo giannetto*, which they did not believe, or they must themselves have died of grief. In vain did they try to distract his attention from such a dangerous pursuit by the rival pastime of fishing, offering him fish "in such quantities, and so large, that he would be astounded could he

but see them." Giovanni preferred a life of excitement and perpetual strife in Florence, till his broils so disturbed the citizens that Piero Soderini was compelled to issue an edict forbidding him to come within twenty miles of the city. The severity of the sentence was, however, afterwards relaxed at the instance of his tutor, Jacopo Salviati.

Meanwhile the correspondence of the young Giovanni with his tutors opens after the customary fashion of boys of twelve years old, no matter, it would seem, to what nationality or period of history they belong.

The first of these letters, dated from Trebbio, May 30th, 1510, to his tutor, Francesco Fortunato, Parish Priest at Castello, consists of exactly three lines, to ask "for five ducats to be given to Niccolò, my servant. I have nothing more to say."\*

Several other letters follow of the same style

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\* *Giovanni delle Bande Nere Lettere Sue. Archivio Storico Italiano Nuova Serie, T.-VII. Parte II., p. 3.* The letters which are quoted throughout the paper are drawn from this source, except on occasions of special interest, when they were copied from the actual manuscript.

and brevity, and concluding with the familiar resource of the inexperienced letter-writer, "Hoping this will find you well, as it leaves me." Still these requests are within such moderate limits that one tutor, Francesco Fortunati, promises to represent to his colleague, Ser. Jacopo, that whatever other accusations may be lodged against their pupil, he cannot at all events be blamed for being a spendthrift. He is, indeed, urged not to put too strong a check upon his desire to spend, lest he should be looked upon as a miser, instead of *Magnifico et liberale quanto si conviene al essere tuo.*"

Thus encouraged, and perhaps justified by such an occasion as the return of the Medici to Florence, the next demand for money is on a larger scale, to be also supplemented with ten flasks of wine. "*Sapete che per le feste si spende,*" he writes, urging at the same time his tutors to come and see for themselves the restored triumph of his family.

Several causes had combined to bring about the restoration of the Medici. First and foremost the

death of Piero de' Medici, the individual member of the family upon whom the hatred of the Florentines was concentrated; secondly, the determination of the Pope, Julius II., to punish the Florentines for their share in the council of Pisa, by forcing the Medici upon them in place of their republic; thirdly, the still strong party for the Medici in Florence, which had made itself conspicuous on the occasion of the martyrdom of Savonarola, and lastly, the hesitating course pursued by Piero Soderini with regard to the French incursion into Italy. He stood aloof from the League formed by the principal Governments of Italy, with the Pope at their head, to free the country from the foreign invasion, so that when the French cause declined, after their dearly purchased victory of Ravenna, which cost them the loss of the gallant Gaston de Foix, and ten thousand men, the chances of the Medici, backed by the forces of the league, improved.

These were further assisted by the wise moderation of the Cardinal Giovanni, afterwards Leo

the Tenth, who, no longer committed by the hasty, ill-considered attempts of his brother Piero, had patiently waited for a favourable opportunity in which to re-instate his family in Florence. That moment had now arrived. In the capacity of Legate of Bologna, Commander-in-Chief of the Papal armies, supported by the whole force of the League, Cardinal Giovanni presented himself before Prato, in the immediate vicinity of the city. His object was twofold, the removal of Piero Soderini from his office, and the consequent restoration of the Medici to power.

So that when the ambassadors, hastily despatched from Florence, arrived to deprecate the attack with offers of a treaty, the Cardinal, on behalf of the allied forces, replied, that so long as Piero Soderini retained his office of Gonfaloniere, Italy would have no security that Florence would not again attach herself to the cause of France; he must, therefore, be deprived of his office, and a new Government be substituted, upon whose support the allied armies could rely.

Florence, roused to indignation, and stirred by a moving address from Piero Soderini, re-inforced the garrison of Prato, and was about to defend herself and her liberties against the formal re-establishment of the Medici, when the temporising policy was suggested to Soderini of allowing them to re-enter as private citizens. He fell into the snare, hesitated, and while he hesitated, the attack on Prato was begun.

Florence trembled at the rumours of the deeds of violence which were already being enacted there. The Medici party saw their opportunity; they caused the Gonfaloniere to be solemnly deposed, and the Magistrates, summoned to perform this act, were then compelled to sign an immediate treaty with the allies. Piero Soderini made his escape, and on the last day of August, 1512, Giuliano de' Medici, the younger son of Il Magnifico, the brother of the unhappy Piero, and the Cardinal Giovanni, re-entered the city in triumph, after an exile of eighteen years.

Our young warrior played, of course, his part

on this memorable occasion, which he described to his tutors as one of "*feste e trionfe sicchè volendo vedete venite*"; but his life afterwards is little connected with Florence, or the steps by which the popular form of government was overthrown, and the Medici gradually resumed, though but for a time, their old position in the city.

His presence in Florence was a constant source of uneasiness to the older and more astute members of the family, who found themselves compromised by the undaunted bearing and fiery temper of the young soldier, while his rash and violent deeds would rudely disturb their policy of lulling the suspicions of the people to sleep by a series of feasts and entertainments: "Soporifics," says an Italian historian, with bitter irony, "of which a plenteous supply was always forthcoming from the pharmacy of the Medici, and which were sure to be administered with consummate skill."

Thus, when some deed of prowess had won for young Giovanni an easy victory in the *joust* or

tournament, the fame of it was apt to be marred by a violence which would result, either in the death of his antagonist, or, as in the case of Boccaccio Alamanni, who, according to a contemporary narrative, "Having come to blows with him (Giovanni), was so grievously wounded in the head, that he bears the mark to this day; and he is considered one of the first swordsmen in Florence.\*"

His tutors remonstrated in vain, and at last were obliged to find their only consolation in writing to each other, exchanging hopes that, as he grew older, he would become more temperate in his actions.

One pathetic letter belongs to this period, in which Lucrezia Salviati de' Medici, the wife of his tutor, and the sister of Cardinal Giovanni, writes to him as a mother to her son.

"Giovanni *mio*," she writes, "have a care of thyself and thy manner of life, studying to live

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\* *Vita di Giovanni de' Medici, Scritta da Gian Girolamo Rossi Vescovo di Pavia, p. 9.*



soberly, wisely, and happily, so that thou mayest enjoy a long life, which may God grant thee."

Scarcely had the Medici regained their power in Florence, than the Cardinal Giovanni, to whom their restoration had been principally due, was, under the name of Leo X., elected to the Papal throne, vacant by the death of Julius II. But his elevation to this high office by no means diverted his attention from the affairs of Florence, and from his pontifical chair at Rome he still held firmly in his grasp the reins of that turbulent city.

Giuliano de' Medici, his younger brother, did not show sufficient capacity for government, so it was determined that he should relinquish his authority to Lorenzo, the son of the unlucky Piero, while it was considered prudent to summon the warrior Giovanni to Rome, lest, in a moment of hasty and fearless enterprise, he should be tempted to snatch into his own hands the reins of power.

So the Pope and Lorenzo paid his debts—for

by this time the views of the young soldier had expanded, and following the one part of his tutors' advice, while he neglected the other, he had already applied to the treasury of Giuliano de' Medici, because he would rather be indebted to him than any one else for money to pay for "Two dozen pairs of gloves, of a quality befitting a gentleman ; a collar, and head-piece of steel for his horse."

But for the rest their warnings remained unheeded, and in Rome he soon made himself as feared and known as he had been in Florence, by his quarrels with the nobles, and by the extraordinary valour with which he extricated himself from positions of great peril. One of these is recorded in a painting by Vasari, in the Sala di Giovanni delle Bande Nere, which represents the bridge of San Angelo before the sack of Rome, and Giovanni, accompanied by only ten soldiers, forcing his way through two hundred of the Orsini followers sent to oppose him.\* Brawls of this nature were, however, too perilous to be counten-

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\* *Vasari Scritti Minori.* Vol viii., p. 187.

anced by the Vatican, for the Orsini were a powerful faction in Rome; moreover, the Pope was too keen a politician to allow so much superfluous valour to be wasted, and he searched for some enterprise in which it could be directed with profit to the papal dominions.

It was not an age when any scruple of justice would be likely to intervene to check such views, and in respect of ambition and the love of aggrandizement, Leo X. was not different to his predecessors.

When, therefore, the young Giovanni had won his spurs in an expedition to reinstate the Caetani in their Dukedom of the little town of Sermoneta in the Campagna, the Pope bethought himself of employing such powerful energy in the acquisition of the Duchy of Urbino, which he had long coveted.

In the first instance he wished to obtain it for his brother, Giuliano, but he, being of a temperate and peaceful disposition, would not favour the scheme.

When Giuliano died, the Pope found in Lor-

enzo, his nephew, a more willing tool, while in Giovanni there was ready to hand a soldier, a Condottiero, eager for any enterprise in which he might give further proof of his valour.

A pretext for the war it was more difficult to supply, but it was finally declared upon two grounds:—

Francesco Maria della Rovere Duca di Urbino was tried by the Papal Court, and found guilty of not having supported the Papal cause against France, and of having put to death the Cardinal Alidorio, for which latter crime, it may be mentioned that, he had been already absolved by Julius II.

The first war of Urbino lasted but two-and-twenty days. Lorenzo de' Medici was the leader of the campaign; under him fought Vitello, Vitelli, Camillo Orsini, Renzo da Ceri, and Giovanni, to whom was given the command of a troop of one hundred horse.

His brilliant skirmishes formed the only feature of the brief campaign.

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Francesco Maria, unable to contend with the Papal forces, made no resistance, and retired upon Mantua.

The Pope, instantly summoning a consistory of the Cardinals, formally deprived him of his Duchy, and proclaimed his nephew, Lorenzo, Duke of Urbino, in his stead.\*

In his first enterprises, Giovanni, while manipulating his troops with extreme dexterity, was obliged to adapt himself to the military tactics of the age, which were defective in the extreme, not only with regard to the moral and physical organisation of the forces, but also in everything connected with the system of giving battle, both as to attack and defence, the conduct of armies in the field, and the besieging of fortified places.

These defects were nowhere more apparent than in Italy, where they could not, as in the case of the

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\*It will be remembered that Lorenzo Duca d' Urbino is the title of the statue (the work of Michael Angelo) in the famous Medici chapel. The corresponding statue of Giuliano de' Medici represents the uncle, brother of Leo X., who had refused to favour the enterprise.

other great European States, be redeemed by the common cause of nationality.

Far otherwise. The turbulence of the Republics, the petty tyranny of the Princes, the insatiable covetousness of the Court of Rome, and the foregoing instance, will sufficiently prove how she continued to justify the immortal illustration of the wolf in the *Divina Commedia* :—

“ *Che mai non empie la bramosa voglia  
E dopo'l pasto ha più fame che pria.*”

(Inf. C. I. 98, 99.)

All these discordant elements produced such a confusion of claims, such a perpetual conflict betwixt might and right, as could not fail to re-act upon military discipline.

The troops, devoid of any *Esprit-de-corps*, were wild and undisciplined. They cared little for honour or renown, and much for plunder and booty, while the *Condottieri* who led them, were content to sell or lend them to those who offered the best prices, and in battle to concentrate their skill, not so much upon destroying the enemy, as

in preserving from destruction their own followers, upon whom they depended for support.

No more striking picture of the system could be found than in the famous Coro (The Battle of Maclodio) of the Conte di Carmagnola, of which one stanza will serve as an example.

*“ Ahi ! Qual d’essi il sacrilego brando  
Trasse il primo il fratello a ferire ?  
Oh terror ! Del confitto esecrando  
La cagione esecranda qual è ?  
Non la sanno ; a dar morte, a morire  
Qui senz’ira ognun d’essi è venuto ;  
E venduto ad un duce venduto,  
Con lui pugna, e non chiede il perchè.”\**

The Conte di Carmagnola was the predecessor

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\*Mrs. Heman’s Translation.

“ Oh, grief and horror ! who the first could dare  
Against a brother’s breast the sword to wield ?  
What cause, unhallow’d and accursed, declare  
Hath bathed with carnage this ignoble field ?  
Think’st thou they know ?—they but inflict and share  
Misery and death, the motive unrevealed,  
Sold to a leader, sold himself to die,  
With him they strive, they fall,—and ask not why.”

of Giovanni delle Bande Nere, and he, with other famous contemporary captains, such as Alberico da Barbiano, Braccio da Montone, and Niccolò Piccinino, had already endeavoured to introduce some method into the desultory practice of Condottiero warfare, by a study of military tactics, which, towards the close of the fourteenth century, were, for the first time, translated by experts into the "*lingua volgare*" from the Greek and Latin writers, and, in particular, the tactics of the Emperor Leo, were the favourite study of these military commanders.

It remained for Machiavelli, by precept, in his "*Arte della Guerra*," and Giovanni by practice, contemporaneously to exemplify them still further.

A second campaign in Urbino afforded the young captain a wider scope for the display of his natural military genius.

The deposed Duke of Urbino, Francesco della Rovere, profited by the disbanding of the mercenary troops after the peace of Verona, to engage them in his pay, and so to employ in his cause the arms



which had been directed against him. Thus reinforced he opened a new campaign.

His former subjects, driven to desperation by the violence of the Papal forces, seized the occasion to rise in open rebellion against the usurper who had been forced upon them, and, but for the coolness and courage of Giovanni, it would have fared ill with the army of Lorenzo, thinned by desertions to the ranks of the enemy.

Giovanni kept his own troops firmly together, and was ever in the vanguard of the fray. Impatient of the slow movements of the army, he made a forced march with his own special troop of two hundred horse, and possessed himself of the Castle of Sorbolungo.

This movement, which was not only one of daring courage, but also a military strategy, was ill-seconded by his brother-captains, Gianbattista da Stabbia and Bruno da Forli, who did not come up in time. Giovanni could not, with his single company, maintain his position, and was obliged to retire upon the base of the army at Orciano,

where he presented himself before Lorenzo, and with loud, indignant words would have him to know that the victory of the day had been lost "either through the negligence or cowardice of Bruno da Forli and Gianbattista da Stabbia."

No other event of importance marked this second campaign. There were a few skirmishes, and Lorenzo, while attacking the Castle of Mandolfo, was wounded in the head by a shot from an arquebuse, so that he was obliged to yield the command to the Cardinal Dovizi da Bibbiena, and we find in the correspondence letters patent from the Cardinal instructing "lo illustre Signor Giovanni de' Medici to betake himself, with his company of horse, to Montefeltro for the furtherance of the enterprise of His Holiness, the protection of his subjects, and to the prejudice and harm of all enemies of the Holy See. July 12th, 1517."

These commands were so well obeyed, that in a short time the Papal armies repossessed themselves of the greater part of the Duchy of Urbino, the ex-Duke, Francesco della Rovere, was again

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reduced to terms, and the second campaign, which had lasted eight months, was brought to a conclusion.

It would not have lasted more than a single day had the challenge of the dispossessed Duke, to meet and decide the question by single combat, been addressed to the young Giovanni instead of to Lorenzo. But the reply made by Lorenzo was to commit the bearer of the message to prison, and it is, therefore, not surprising, and only just, that the expenses entailed by the duration of the war should have fallen upon the Ducal Treasury, or that Giovanni should have felt himself justified, in a letter of this date, in applying to it for "one hundred golden ducats, a standard with his device, and a "Cavallo Turco."

The young warrior's predilection for this special breed of horse re-appears often in his letters, and it is worthy of notice, because it is significant of the system of light skirmishing, which, having fallen into disuse in Italy, it was his pride to restore.

A contemporary historian\* dwells upon the dexterity with which, at comparatively little cost, he supplied his troops immediately with steeds of this description, and furnished the soldiers with steel head-pieces (his own is represented in both portrait and statue), and lances, at that time discarded in Italy, together with the knowledge and practice generally of what have been technically described as "*Les Armes Blanches*," these being found of little avail against fire-arms.

It is, however, well-known, that nearly two centuries elapsed after the discovery of gunpowder before it affected any material change in the art of war, and although field-pieces were used at Cressy (1346), it was not till after the battle of Pavia (1525), that the immense force of gunpowder, as an engine of destruction, became generally recognised.

This famous battle marks the close, rather than the beginning, of our warrior's career, and it is

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\*Vita di Giovanni de Medici scritta de Giangirolamo Rossi.—p. 12.

interesting to see with what success, and with what perseverance, he organised the company of picked men who were ready to follow him through any enterprise, and with whom his name will always be associated in history.

A brief interval of peace in Italy interrupted Giovanni in his career as a warrior, and enables us to give a glance at his private life.

At the early age of nineteen he married Maria Salviati, the daughter of his tutor, Ser. Jacopo Salviati, and of Lucrezia de' Medici, sister of Leo X.

In the earlier letters of the correspondence her name appears twice; for the first time in the letter of Lucrezia Salviati already alluded to, and secondly in a letter from Francesco Suasio, who managed the affairs of Giovanni in Florence, and to whom many of the warrior's letters are addressed.

“To-day” (Jan. 6th, 1516), writes Francesco Suasio, “Madonna Maria has returned. God be praised she is well, and in good spirits, having

lately had letters from V. S., which seem to have given her great satisfaction. In the absence of V. S. nothing can be more grateful to her than to receive the letters of V.S."

It was fortunate for Madonna Maria that she could not look into the future, or she would have seen that this would be her only comfort during the brief period of their married life, as the enforced absence of her husband grew longer and longer upon the battle-field, where his valour would render his presence more and more indispensable. But Maria Salviati was not only a virtuous woman, in an age when virtue among women was the exception, and not the rule, she was also a person of remarkable character, and she was able to maintain her influence over her husband by letters which are in themselves a study, on account of their prudence, forethought, and watchful care for his interests.

One of the most striking of these relates to a quarrel between her fiery husband and a certain Captain Camillo Appiano d' Aragona, who had

dared to interfere with one of the soldiers of Giovanni d' Medici. An immediate challenge was the result. Lorenzo Duca d' Urbino interfered, but opposition only stimulated the angry temper of Giovanni. He urged his adversary if an *uomo da bene* to choose another rendezvous, where Il Signor Cugino could not interfere; and repaired for such purpose to Ferrana, issuing a manifesto urging every one, *sia Signore, sia Cavaliero, Gentilhuomo o Soldato per sua gentilezza* to let Signor Camillo know that his adversary was waiting for him in Ferrana. But Camillo was for his own safety well advised in remaining under the shelter of *chi mi poteva comandare*, and refusing to leave it even under pain of the last threat hurled at him by his enraged opponent, of his being for ever dishonoured as a soldier. Still the great and powerful influence of the Signor Cugino was not to be gainsayed, and Giovanni having at last been made to understand that he had caused great offence by his violence, found himself compelled to write to the Duca d' Urbino, apologising for his conduct,

and accompanying the apology with a request to be allowed, in token of penitence, to serve in the Duke's escort to France, where the Duke was going to stand godfather to the son of Francis I. But the Signor Duca was not so easily appeased—even though Maria Salviati presented this petition to him in person—and Giovanni was not suffered to return to Florence.

Maria Salviati, in her letter to her husband, implores him to make no attempt to re-enter the city, as the Duke wishes to make a trial of his patience. The Duke will not accept of his escort to France, for fear he should embark in some fresh broil which would set a bad example; but if Giovanni will attend to her admonitions, the Duke will, on his return from France, treat him as a brother; if not, "I know," she concludes, "from his own lips, that it will be your ruin; and I will go into a convent the day I hear from you that you are determined to defy the Duke."

Giovanni, yielding to her intreaties, betook himself to Fano, where he found a *sfogo* for his



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energies in arming three ships, a galleon and two brigantines, in which he gave chase to the pirates who infested the Adriatic.

The decree of exile was at last removed by the special intercession of the Pope, whose good offices were obtained by a present, characteristic alike of the age and of the man, of two falcons, sent by a special messenger to Rome.

The Cardinal Salviati, instructed by the Pope, informed the donor that the falcons had given "sincere pleasure to His Holiness; that His Holiness has a high esteem for him, and that the protection of the Holy See shall never fail him, and that with a little patience and soberness of life he may hope shortly to rise superior to the evil turns of fortune." (July 1st, 1518.)

The intercession seems to have been successful, for Giovanni was in Florence when, at the death of Lorenzo Duca d' Urbino, in the following year, the Pope redeemed his promise by the offer of a command of a hundred horse.

The young warrior hastened to Rome to express

his gratitude, and to enter upon his new duties. The news of the birth of a son followed him almost immediately to Rome, a son destined to be the future Grand Duke of Tuscany, and who, in the first fervour of his zeal, Giovanni dedicated to the service of his patron.

He rushed into his presence. "Holy Father," he said, "I offer to your Holiness my first-born son, the news of whose birth has just reached me."

Leo X. replied that he accepted the gift, that he should look upon the infant as his own son, and as an earnest that he might prove the wisest, the most discreet, and the worthiest son of the house of Medici, he insisted upon his being called Cosimo, after his great ancestor, Cosimo Pater Patriæ.

The letter which announced the good news to Giovanni was from his old tutor, Francesco Fortunati. It ended with the remark, that Madonna Maria much wished to see her husband, and hoped that he would obtain special leave of

absence from His Holiness in order to come to her.

But the Pope's ambitious mind was intent on a great scheme, and he could not part with the young warrior, upon whose powerful arm he depended for its execution.

He first determined upon the seizure of the smaller states in the Roman territory, which, having become the property of successful adventurers, were only allowed to exist on sufferance, and were carefully watched by the Church of Rome, with a view to enforcing her claims whenever an opportunity occurred.

Such a favourable moment having presented itself, Giovanni de' Medici, with a thousand horse and four thousand foot, was despatched to attack the city of Fermo, then held by Ludovico Freducci, a military commander of great reputation.

A desperate encounter ensued, in which Freducci was left dead on the field with half his followers.

There could be no greater tribute to his courage than the brief half-dozen lines in the square hand-

writing of his great adversary, who, after describing to his treasurer, Francesco degli Albizzi, how the day went, "cum Messer Ludovico" observes in conclusion, that this is the opinion of one "who knows truth from falsehood, and brave men from cowards."\*

A similar design upon Ferrara, which was to have been accomplished by treachery rather than by force, having succumbed, the Pontiff no longer delayed the development of a scheme which had also occupied the mind of Julius II., and which had for its purpose the expulsion of the French from the north, and the Spaniards from the South of the peninsular, while the Pope would remain in the position of the Defender of the Liberties of Italy.

The old tradition of the appeal to the Empire was invoked to bring about this result, and a league was formed with the Emperor Charles V., who gladly availed himself of the opportunity to crush his hated rival.

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\* Copied from Autograph.

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Such was the idea, but no purpose so single as the liberties of Italy existed in reality. They merely served as a pretext for the conflicting ambitions of the great potentates of the age—the Pope, the Emperor, and Francis I., with Henry VIII. and Wolsey in the far background of England, where each watched for his own advantage, and was ready at any moment to turn the scale by throwing his weight into the opposite balance.

Italy was the chosen arena in which the chivalry of the century were to meet and decide the question, where Bayard had succeeded to Gaston de Foix in the French camp, and where Giovanni, *Il Valoroso*, as he was now called, was fast becoming the great captain of Italy, in place of his illustrious predecessor, Gonsalvo di Cordova.

Events which form the subject of correspondence between Guicciardini and Machiavelli, characters which live in the portraits of Raphael and Titian, have given to the epoch a wonderful life. Still from the walls of the picture-galleries in Florence their eyes seem to meet and answer your gaze,

while each countenance brings some contribution to the story of the times.

Cardinal Doyizj da Bibbiena, with his roll in his hand, perhaps the letters patent for Giovanni de' Medici, his shrewd Italian face with the gravity of a statesman, and just the sense of humour playing round the mouth to show how that gravity could be laid aside while he wrote the first comedy of the age. One step further, and the portrait of Leo X., attended by the Cardinal Giulio de Medici (afterwards Clement VII.) and Luigi Rossi seems alive with truth and vigour. The love of literature and art are suggested by the open book on the table, glowing evidently with many a rare illumination. Every feature in the countenance shows the determined ambition of the character; but the love of pleasure is also so distinctly conveyed, that you can fancy that the lines of the mouth will expand into a grin, *insino all'orecchie*, when he hears that Giovanni's horse has won the *Palio*. The Emperor Charles V. on his white horse by the sea-shore; Gonzage, Duke of Mantna; the



GIOVANNI DELLE BANDE NERE.

Portrait by Titian—No. 614, R. Galleria degli Uffizi,  
Florence.

*Face page 41.*





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dispossessed Duke of Urbino, with his beautiful Duchess ; and finally, the young warrior Giovanni, himself in full armour, with his helmet in his hand :

“ Severe in youthful beauty.”

His achievements can be better divined from the purpose in that countenance than from their subsequent elaborate and semi-allegorical representation by Vasari, in the Sala di Giovanni della Bande Nere in the Palazzo Vecchio.”\*

Such then were some of the principal characters who played their part in the great historical drama of the fifteenth century. By a new patent from Prospero Colonna, the commander-in-chief of the Papal army, Giovanni was given the command of two thousand light horse, with directions to march upon Parma, for the league had for its previous objects the recovery of the Papal feuds of Parma and Piacenza, and the re-instatement of

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\* *Vasari Scritti Minori*. Vol. viii., p. 183-8. Ed. Milanese, 1882.

Francesco Sforza in Milan. Giovanni's orders were supplemented by a letter from Guicciardini, at that time governor of Bologna, imploring the great captain to see that his troops do not aggravate the people, so as to leave enemies behind him when he evacuates the towns, and to order his men to live at their own cost.

Parma was defended by Monsignore dello Scudo, Federigo da Bozzolo and Il Capitano Carbone, the latter made sallies across the river which divides the city, but being every time worsted in the encounter by Giovanni de' Medici, it became a byword, that the coal could no longer burn because of the water which had been found to quench it.

When at last the city on one side of the bridge called Codiponte was taken, Giovanni, followed by his men, was the first to mount the breach. His valour on this occasion, as in the war of Urbino, aroused the jealousy of those in command; he was ill seconded, and the remaining half of the city on the other side of the river held out till

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relieved by a re-inforcement of French troops under Lautrech.

The Papal forces withdrew along the line of the Taro, under the generalship of Prosper Colonna, whose envy of the superior courage of Giovanni de' Medici had produced a coolness betwixt the two captains.

The little territory of San Secondo now lay in the way of the army. For some time the Pope had cherished the design of including it in the states of the church, but it belonged to Bianca Rosso, the widowed daughter of Caterina Sforza, and the half-sister of Giovanni de' Medici. The young warrior threw his shield over her with the utmost chivalry, and having occupied the castle in her defence, defied anyone to take it from him. Advised by one of his captains to retain the possession of it on his own account, he peremptorily forbade him ever to repeat the suggestion at the peril of his life, for Giovanni would "have him to know that he loved his sister better than all the estates in the world, and that, if he wanted an

estate, he could have as many as he liked, as great and greater than the one in question."

Over his soldiers Giovanni had the most absolute control; they idolized him for his courage, and would follow him wherever he led them, assured that he would never expose them to any danger, without standing in the forefront of it himself; therefore they accepted his discipline which at times was strict enough. One curious evidence of this appears in a little group of letters, which, by their date, seem to belong to this period of the war. One soldier, Martino, had incurred his displeasure: he is imprisoned and put in irons, and Giovanni's orders are: "*Nè per prieghi de homo ch'el sia al mondo nè per altra cosa non fate muovere li ceppi dalli piedi a Martino, et non ve lo smenticate et non sia fatto.*"—Sept. 19th, 1520.\*

Two days afterwards the same orders are reiter-

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\*Not for the prayers of any living man; on no account let the fetters be removed from the feet of Martino; remember this and mind it is not done."

ated, “ *Credo che abbiate inteso la volontà mia verso Martino ;*”\* the following day, “ *Non date a mangiare a Martino, se non agli et cipolli et vino forte da bere ; et non mancate,*”† and it is not till the 29th of the month, that Giovanni gives leave for the fetters to be removed, or rather to be exchanged for handcuffs: “ *Perché diceste havere male a una gambu, sao contento li faceiate cavare li ceppi et ha altra aggiungendogli le manette per contracambio.*”‡

Maria Salviati in her replies assured him that his orders about his soldiers will be scrupulously obeyed. She writes to him frequently, although she can imagine that he is too much occupied in *cose grandissime* to read her letters, still, the sending letters from one to the other, what is it but speaking to each other in absence? Chosimo is

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\*I presume you have understood my wishes about Martino.

†Do not give Martino anything to eat save onions and salad, and strong wine to drink. Do not fail in this.”

‡ Copied from Autograph,

“ Because you tell me one of his legs has been injured, I consent to the fetters being removed, but they are to be exchanged for hand-cuffs.”

in excellent health. She wishes to go to Santa Maria di Loreto to pay her vow, but she hears he has been displeased at her having left the house, and she promises not to leave it again, nor to take her son out of it.\*

To judge from the history of the war at this period it would seem that Maria Salviati was justified in her supposition that her husband would be too occupied to read her letters, for his military genius had made him the leading figure of the campaign. He covered with such skill the retreat of the Imperial and Papal forces from Parma, that, for the first time, the French troops found themselves unable to follow up their success.

There had been great displeasure at Rome on account of this withdrawal from Parma, the Pope suspecting insincerity on the part of his allies, but his trust on his favourite warrior remained

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The house is still to be seen in Florence. It is in the Via del Corso, adjoining the church of the Madonna dei Ricci, and is now in the possession of the Padri Scolopi, and forms part of their schools.

unshaken, so that when the allies prepared to pass into Lombardy, the young commander of the horse received a special injunction, *che per amore di Dio non mettiate indugio alcuno a cavalcare*.

This was to prevent Lautrech from joining with the Venetian contingent, and so covering the line of the Adda.

After frequent movements and skirmishes of little importance, an incident, characteristic of the period, changed the whole fortune of the war.

The Swiss Mercenaries in the pay of France were disappointed of their salary; the three hundred thousand ducats destined for this purpose having been appropriated by the avaricious Duchess of Angoulême, the mother of Francis I.

The Papal Legates, Giulio de' Medici, and the Cardinal of Sion, promptly availed themselves of the opportunity, and bought them over to the side of the allies.

The French army, alarmed and dispirited, retreated beyond the Adda.

The Papal and Imperial commanders, strong

in their new reinforcement, resolved to advance upon Milan.

While Prospero Colonna regained his reputation as a general, in the secrecy and despatch with which the passage of the river was effected, Lautrech, the French general, lost his by not attempting to oppose it till too late.

After a fatal delay the French cavalry came up and fought with great courage to interrupt the landing of the enemy. Only half the troops of the allied army had reached the further side; the other half perceived from the opposite bank the danger to which their companions were exposed.

Giovanni de' Medici, unable to remain any longer a mere spectator of the scene, turned to his men. "Now," he said, "is the moment when I can prove the courage of my men. Let each one of you take a foot-soldier *en croupe*, and follow me."

He then plunged into the river, mounted on a favourite Turkish horse, called "Sultano." His example was instantly followed by the whole of



his troops, not one of them stopped to consider the depth or rapidity of the stream, and very shortly they were observed to land safely on the opposite shore, and to turn the wavering fortunes of the day.

The feat was the more remarkable as it was accomplished at the junction of the Adda and the Po; a circumstances of which the painter, Vasari, did not fail to avail himself when he represented the feat being performed, while Prospero and Giulio de' Medici contemplate it from the shore, and the allegorical figures of the Adda and the Po fall back in amazement and admiration.\*

The advance upon Milan, and the storming of city, was the natural consequence of this exploit.

It was an equally natural consequence that Giovanni should be the first to enter the city by the breach.†

But it was an evidence of the tender feeling, rare in those times, in which he never failed to-

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\* Vasari Scritti Minori. Vol. VIII. pp. 183-4.

† Also a subject treated by Vasari, *Ibid.*

wards his mother's children, that he should have made it his first business to seek out his young nephew, the Conte di San Secondo, then fighting on the opposite side, to give him a safe conduct, thereby forfeiting the immense ransom which would have accrued to him had he retained the young count as a prisoner of war.

“The fame of the exploits of Il Signor Giovanni has become the common talk of Rome,” writes his treasurer, Francesco degli Albizzi, to his old tutor, Francesco Fortunati, “They are praised to the skies, his name is on every ones lips; all the hopes of success for the cause of the allied armies are centred on him.”—Nov. 12th, 1521.

On hearing of the triumph of his troops, Pope Leo X., who was passing his time at the villa Malliana, returned to Rome for the purpose of organizing public rejoicings for this important victory. Before these could take place he was seized with sudden indisposition, and in two days time was dead.

“*Papa Leone è Morto,*” writes the same corres-

pondent in consternation, "some say from poison, and yesterday his cup-bearer, Marchese Bernabó, and Il Riccio, were seized, but nothing having been proved they will not be put upon their trial."

Some historians have suggested that the death of the Pope was caused by excess of joy at the triumph of his arms, but this is not a likely solution when one remembers how many vicissitudes of success and failure he had previously experienced.

The dark mystery in which this, perhaps the most brilliant of all the pontificates, abruptly closed has never yet been really solved. Conjecture is still left free to speculate and moralize upon the truth of the story that the pontiff, deserted by all his servants, would have been left in utter loneliness but for the presence of one poor *frate*, Mariano, who had been the jester of his court.

Bewildered and terrified, he knew not how to meet imminent death, till at last, as the agony

approached, the *frate* timidly suggested, “*Raccor-  
datevi di Dio Santo Padre.*”

The dying man caught at the consolation, and ejaculating, “*Dio buono, Dio buono, O Dio buono !*” drew his last breath.

Mindful of the patronage, and proud of the favour of the late pontiff, Giovanni made all his troops wear mourning for him, and hence the origin of the title “*Delle Bande Nere.*”

Like the shifting of a kaleidiscopes the whole scene changed in Italy with the death of the Pontiff. Francesco della Rovere seized the opportunity to re-enter upon his Dukedom of Urbino, and profiting by the confusion at Rome, where the Cardinals were disputing over the successor to the Papacy, arrested Perugia from the state of the Church, and advanced upon Siena. The Florentines, in trepidation, summoned Giovanni in hot haste from Lombardy, to defend their city with his now celebrated “*Bande Nere.*”

There is no record of his reception in Florence, where the elder branch of the Medici continued to

view with suspicion and alarm this powerful representative of the younger branch of their house. But the Signoria had reason to congratulate themselves upon having invoked his aid in that moment of peril for the city, for the mere sight of the formidable warrior in the field was sufficient to make Francesco Maria d' Urbino withdraw his troops without striking a blow. This retreat was quickly followed by a mandate from the "Otto di Pratica della Republica Florentina" to Giovanni, to withdraw his troops also from the provinces, as the peace was signed with the Signor Duca d' Urbino, and to bring them back to Florence, where he must distribute them as he thought fit.

So marked a tribute to the fame of Giovanni de' Medici as a military commander made it probable that, whichever of the great contending parties could secure him to their side might count on victory; and the greatest change in the military features of the campaign was the passing over of Giovanni and his "Bande Nere" from the Im-

perialist cause to the side of the French monarch. This proceeding, occasioned by a personal quarrel with Prospero Colonna, and general dissatisfaction among the "Bande Nere" at the treatment they had received from the Imperialists, did not pass without comment at the time. But all such comments ceased when Giovanni issued his famous *smentita*, or challenge, of April 19th, 1522.

"Having heard, through the trumpeter of Monsignore di Lautrech, that there are, in these parts, many who say that my obligations to his Cesarean Majesty should have withheld me from offering my services to his most Christian Majesty. I hereby make known to whoever is my equal in rank, who dares to say that I have failed in any obligation whatsoever, either by word or deed, to his Cesarean Majesty, or to anyone in the camp of his Cesarean Majesty, he has lied, and lies wherever he repeats it; and this I will sustain by force of arms at anyone's pleasure.

“From the Camp of the King at Misano, April 19th, 1522.

“GIOVANNI DE’ MEDICI.”

No one dared to answer this challenge, or take up the warrior’s glove ; and if, at the safe distance of three and a half centuries, his conduct is questioned, it might be urged in his favour that the especial patron of Giovanni was Pope Leo X., and not the Emperor, also that the Pope himself was always watching to see from what quarter would blow the wind most favourable to his interests.

In 1515 he had allied himself with Francis I., and purchased, by the cession of Parma and Piacenza, the King’s protection of the family of Medici in Florence. In 1521, after vacillating to the last moment between the Emperor and Francis I., he finally made a league with the Emperor in order to regain the possession of the feuds, which he had ceded to the French Monarch.

But victory did not sit on the crest of the renowned Giovanni when he fought for the first

time on the side of France, in the battle "*della Biccocca.*" Despite the most heroic efforts on the part of Giovanni and his cavalry, which flashed like lightning all over the field, to mask the evolutions of the French infantry from the Imperialists; in spite of their tremendous hand-to-hand fight in the vanguard, on the Ponte Vico,\* with the cavalry of the Marchese di Pescara, on the issue of which the French general, Lautrech, had placed all his hopes, an ill-advised movement of the Swiss mercenaries lost the day, and it was only left for Giovanni de' Medici to show himself as great a captain in the hour of defeat as of victory, by covering the retreat of the whole army, so that the enemy, although victorious, durst not pursue the black standard of "*Le Bande Nere.*"

After this disastrous defeat, Lautrech returned to France, to carry the bad news to his master. The Swiss mercenaries, discontented, and still

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\* This feat forms another subject of the paintings of Vasari.—See *Scritti Minori*. Vol. VIII., p. 187.



unpaid, returned to their country, and Giovanni took up his quarters with his troops in Cremona, together with the remnant of the French army, commanded by Lo Scudo, a *condottiero* of great reputation, the adversary of Giovanni in the expedition against Parma, his companion in arms in the battle "*della Biccocca.*" The first endeavour of both captains was to fortify the city.

But here, as with the Swiss mercenaries, the failure of the French finance brought about serious consequences. There were no funds, either for the expenses of fortification, or for the pay of the troops, and the Imperialist army was advancing upon the city.

Lo Scudo, without consulting his brother captain, entered into a secret capitulation with the enemy, and a violent quarrel ensued. Giovanni protested that it was iniquitous to finish the war by secret treaty, so that the soldiers could be disbanded, and deprived of their pay.

"I have sworn," he said, "to uphold, during my lifetime, the cause of my soldiers as my

own, and never to countenance the practice of turning them off, worn out, wounded, and impoverished, to starve. My personal honour is involved in preserving from such treatment the soldiers who have followed my standard. I know too well—every one knows it,—the practice of the French, who, when they require the service of the Italians, are ready with every courtesy, and every promise of liberality, but when the day goes ill with them, they think of nothing but saving themselves, while they leave their allies in the lurch.”

The wrath of Giovanni de' Medici was not to be trifled with. Lo Scudo found it his best policy to pacify him, by the timely distribution of what supplies he still had among the *Bande Nere*; at the same time, not trusting to hazard the repetition of such a scene, he hastened the capitulation of Cremona, and returned to France with the utmost speed, “*a bandiere spiegate.*”

The remainder of the year 1523, Giovanni, in the service of neither the Pope, nor the Emperor, nor the king of France, was free to make war

on his own account, and with the chivalry which he had before exhibited for his half-sister, Bianca Contessa di San Secondo, he again flew to her rescue.

The temporary lull of the war in Lombardy had let loose the enemies of the Signori di San Secondo to renew their attacks; and led by Bernardo Rosso, Bishop of Trevigi, they had already possessed themselves of many of the castles of the territory. Their army consisted of four thousand infantry, with cavalry and artillery in proportion. The Contessa would have been in sore straits but for the timely arrival of Giovanni, who, with his *Bande Nere* cut to pieces the advancing army, possessed himself of their artillery and munition, regained the stolen castles one by one, and restored them to his sister. Nor was it till all were recovered that he bethought himself of acquiring for his own possession, and that by purchase, and not by conquest, the castle of Aulla, in the Lunigiana, where he established a stronghold for himself and his men.

It was not likely that the Bande Nere would be content to remain long in idleness. Petty quarrels with the neighbouring lords of the territory, the Malespini, in which they were always worsted, afforded Giovanni the opportunity of acquiring more territory, and of adding to his stronghold, till he assumed a position of such independence as to arouse the ever-watchful jealousy of Cardinal Giulio de' Medici, lest he should make use of it to assert his position in Florence, to which the lately acquired territory lay in dangerous propinquity.

The astute Cardinal, knowing that nothing was more acceptable to Giovanni than money, for the pay of his soldiers, made a contract with Cardinal Cibo, whose relations owned Massa and Carrara, and were trembling for their own safety, to purchase the Castle of Aulla and adjoining territory of Giovanni for an immense sum, with which he was induced to retire to Reggio. Here, for a short time, he held a sort of "*corte bandita*," to which, attracted by his extraordinary fame, men

of all sorts and reputation repaired. Among these, we find another living portrait in the picture gallery of the age, that of Pietro Aretino,\* for whom Giovanni showed a friendship at once so passionate and so tender, that it would hardly be credited but for letters, lavish in such terms of friendship, as might gracefully adorn a correspondence written in the soft atmosphere of a lady's bower, but which are scarcely to be looked for from the pen of a renowned warrior in the midst of the din and tumult of the camp. The friendship was reciprocated to the fullest extent, and nowhere does the character of Pietro Aretino show to such advantage as when he exhibits an unswerving devotion to his strange military friend.

During this enforced leisure, Giovanni occupied himself with the pleasures of the chase, for he was a keen sportsman, and with the purchase of horses of his favourite breed. He hears that Malatesta de' Medici has a "*chavallo Turco.*" He

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\* By Titian, Reale Galleria del Pitti. No. 54.

instructs his treasurer, Francesco degli Albizzi, to buy it, and give a good price for it. The next letter of this period mentions two more, one *leardo pomellato*” (dappled grey); and one, “*baio.*” These are to be bought for eighty and ninety *scudi*, respectively; and they are to be sent most carefully by a trustworthy person (not “*qualche bestia*”), who will take care of them, and conduct them by a secure road, “*a mano, a mano, di passo in passo.*”\*

But however quietly the warrior, pacified by the largesse which he had been enabled to give to his soldiers, might acquiesce in the life of exile, his wife, Maria Salviati, was not so tolerant of it. A letter, dated Reggio, May 15, 1523, is still extant, in which she protests against the injury and injustice which have kept her and her husband for ten years out of their rightful position in Florence.

The protest was of course fruitless, and for poor Madonna Maria a time was coming when a new campaign, with all its horrors, would make

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\*All these letters were copied from the autographs.

her regret the comparative tranquillity of her life at Reggio.

The life of Giovanni de' Medici, short in the term of years, long if measured by events, naturally divides itself into three periods: The first closed with the death of Leo X., his first and principal patron; the second is marked by desultory warfare, and concludes with the conclusion of the few months retirement at Reggio (1523), but events crowd themselves into the three years which form the last and most brilliant period of the warrior's career.

Francis I. was not the monarch to accept without a struggle the loss of his conquests, and the complete discomfiture of his forces in Italy. The military honour of France was wounded, and not even a League, which included Henry VIII. of England, the Pope, and the Emperor, the Archduke of Austria, half the Princes, and all three Republics of Italy, could turn him from his purpose.

So under a new, and not more fortunate, general, Admiral Bonnivet, the campaign was reopened,

and Italy again chosen as the theatre for the re-enacted scene.

Giovanni de' Medici was by this time acknowledged to be the greatest captain of the age, and, as neither cause was intrinsically good, we may contemplate him with equanimity, perhaps even with a certain respect for his impartiality, fighting first on one side and then on the other.

At first he is with the League. Disgusted by the conduct of the French at Cremona, he returned to his former camp, and to his old general, Prospero Colonna, now so ill and infirm as to be carried in a litter along the line of the troops. The conduct of the army fell therefore into the able hands of Giovanni de' Medici. The skill with which he withdrew the troops into Milan, remaining, as before, to protect the rear ; his gallant sorties in search of provisions, which enabled them to hold the city till re-inforcements came, drew from the dying Colonna such an eulogy as healed effectually the breach which, since the expedition against Parma, had existed between the two military leaders.



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Colonna lived to see the retreat of the French, and then died, Dec. 30th, 1523.

Francis I. had been ill-advised in his selection of Bonnivet as a leader of the campaign, for, as a French historian truly remarks, "*chacun de ses pas fut marqué par une faute et par des revers.*"

He could make no stand at all against the Marchese di Pescara, who had succeeded to Colonna's command, supported by Giovanni "*l'Invitto*," as he was now universally designated.

The victory of Robecco; the pursuit of the French army across the Ticino; the defence of the Ponte Rozzo; the confronting of ten thousand Swiss, sent as re-inforcements to the French army at the entrance of their mountain gorge, driving them back by the way that they came till they returned as allies of the Imperialist cause, were crowning instances of valour selected by Vasari to transmit to posterity on the walls of the Sala in the Palazzo Vecchio,\* while a letter of the period relates that, "*Sua Signoria G. dei Medici è sempre stato in grand-*

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\*Vasari Scritti Minori, Vol. VIII., p. 186.

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*issime fazioni nè mai ha havuto un hora di riposo."*

It only needed the death of Bayard, while covering the retreat of the French across the Sesia, to complete the disasters of the French arms, or the triumph of their adversaries.

The pursuit of the flying foe to Marseille, and the siege of that city by Pescara and Bourbon were military manœuvres which did not commend themselves to Giovanni. Very likely he may have held the well-known saying of Machiavelli, "*A nemico che fugge ponte d'oro,*"\* and if so his opinion on this occasion was justified by the subsequent retreat of Pescara along the Riviera before the advance in person of Francis I. upon Italy to retrieve his cause.

The arrival of the French monarch in Italy marks the zenith of the fame of the warrior Medici.

We cannot help feeling that, as a work of art, there would have been something lacking in the career of Giovanni if he had not shared the

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\* "Make a golden bridge for the flying enemy."

barren honour of Pavia; a blank page in his history if it could not record a personal service to the chivalrous king. As soon as he joins the French camp, the enthusiasm for his master exhibits itself in every line of his letters. But before taking this important step he asked counsel of Cardinal Salviati, the Pope's legate.

“Two messengers,” he writes, “from the king of France having been sent by his majesty to ask me to join his forces, I beg V. S. Rev<sup>ssno</sup>. to counsel me as to what I had better do.”\*

Clement VII., another Medici Pope, had succeeded to the brief Pontificate of Adrian VI.; he had also succeeded to the vacillating crooked policy of the Vatican from whence no straightforward reply was ever known to emanate.

True to such a policy on this occasion, Pope Clement VII. signed a secret compact with France, undertaking that neither the Papal States nor

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\* Nov. 15th, 1524. *Lettera di Giovanni dei Medici a Cardinale Giovanni Salviati Legato in Lombardia.* (Copied from autograph.)

Florence would support the Imperialist cause, and, with consummate hypocrisy, made reply to the ambassadors from the Emperor, that his sacred office forbade him to take any part in the war between Christian princes.\*

In such circumstances it was not likely that Giovanni would receive the definite counsel he asked for. Some vague direction as to prudence, ending with the significant phrase, "*Ogni cosa non è da scrivere,*" represents the amount of guidance vouchsafed to him; and the situation is unmasked in his own letter from the king's camp before Pavia to his friend Pietro Aretino.

"Pietro *da bene*,—

"It pleases me to know, through Messer Antonio Guiducci, that you were summoned as a witness to be present when Pope Clemente received my letter, and I am obliged to you for the answer you made to his holiness when he exclaimed on receiving it, '*Giovanni ha pur fatto*

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\* Guicciardini Storia d'Italia. Lib XV., p. 629.

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*delle sue.*' I have been received by king Francis as a brother; but before I joined his majesty at Pavia, I had made every endeavour to serve with the Imperialists. However, all is for the best. I sent back the order of St. Michael, *a questio gran sire* (meaning the king), and I tore up the deeds which conveyed a pension to myself and to my wife, observing that such a dignity should be bestowed upon some one who had served his majesty a long while, and not upon me who had but just entered in his service; and as to the salary, let the reward be in proportion to the deserts. So that a time may come when Nostro Signore (meaning the Pope) will speak differently. I know I have no occasion to impress upon you what to say to those who think I might have acted otherwise than I have done. I was forgetting to tell you, that yesterday the king was regretting that I had not brought you with me, and I told his majesty that the life of a court was more agreeable to you than that of a camp, and his majesty replied that, when I wrote to you, I

was to tell you that his orders were to be obeyed ; and he has instructed his special messenger to Rome to prevail upon his holiness to send you to him. I know also that far more than for your own advantage you will come for the purpose of seeing me, for I do not know how to live without L'Aretino.

“ *Di Pavia, Il tuo,*

“ G. DE' MEDICI.”

Only the Italian word “ *brio* ” can describe the exhilaration which breathes in every line of the warrior's letters, many of them actually dated “ *Ex Castris felicissimi Christianissimi,* ” and among these we find descriptions of “ *Le più belle Scaramucchie del mondo,* ” performed in the presence of the king and his court, right up to the tents of the enemy. Several horses have been killed during these exploits, but the King has presented him with six hundred scudi to buy more.

Many are the anecdotes which exist of the feats of prowess, during the siege of Pavia, so

lightly described by the warrior as "*scaramuccie*." On one occasion, the safe convoy of munition from Ferrara had scarcely been accomplished, when the King, designating an outpost occupied by the enemy, observed to his Captains, what an advantage it would be to gain possession of it. All agreed, but none volunteered to make the assault, till Giovanni de' Medici, who had kept silence during the discussion, observed :

" Sacred Majesty, your Highness stands more in need of actions than advice "; and without stopping to put on his armour, went directly to the coveted outpost, followed by a few of his followers, stormed the place under the eyes of the King and his astonished captains, and gained possession of it, his horse having been killed under him in the fray.

On another occasion, when a sortie was made from the besieged city, Giovanni laid wait for the enemy in an ambuscade, and drove the troops back into Pavia. So brilliant was the manœuvre, that Bonnivet, again in command, asked to be taken to the scene of the fray.

It has been already seen that this unlucky general had caused the ruin of the French cause in the former campaign; he was now destined to be indirectly the means of dealing it a still more fatal blow. Giovanni de' Medici was showing him the scene of the exploit, when a ball, fired from an arquebuse, hit the great captain in the leg and broke it. He was completely disabled, and obliged to be transported from the camp before the great battle, which took place some ten days afterwards, and which, the King was wont to say, would never have been lost, or he himself taken prisoner, had Giovanni been there to lead his *Bande Nere* into the field.

The battle of Pavia was fought on the 24th of February, 1525. A letter from Rome, in the following April, while it confirms the utter loss and ruin of the French cause, briefly stated in the memorable message sent by Francis I. to his mother, is also a testimony to the great esteem felt for Giovanni de' Medici by all those who came under his influence.



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“*Illus. Signore et Patrone mio oss<sup>ssmo</sup>,*” writes a devoted adherent,—“The rout of the French army, and the capture of His Most Christian Majesty, whose evil fortune has involved that of V. S., with the downfall of every high expectation (knowing, as I do, how great was the affection manifested by His Majesty for your Excellency), have so disturbed my mind that I dared not, nor indeed did I know how to address V. S., fearing that my letters could only be an annoyance, as, for the reasons above given, I could have nothing encouraging to say, more especially when I remembered that your Excellency had been grievously wounded—the greatest misfortune of all—so that my despair was redoubled, for when I had looked to see V. S., together with His Most Christian Majesty, victorious and prosperous, I have instead to contemplate all such hopes crushed, and your Excellency gravely ill of a fearful wound. The only consolation I can think of lies in the reflection that such high generosity and valour as that which resides in your

Excellency, cannot be hid away or buried out of sight ; your Excellency being known to all the world, and having inspired universal affection and esteem.

“ Having thus consoled myself, and being fully persuaded of your Excellency’s noble qualities, I am certain that with these and other similiar considerations, your Excellency has been able to possess his great soul in peace, because in such a soul, out of the ashes of a dead hope, a hundred new ones will kindle into life. Nor do I write thus merely to say smooth things, but because it is the simple truth, and because I wish to assure your Excellency of my devoted service, for I would rather serve your Excellency than any other lord ; and thus, I beg to remain you Excellency’s most devoted and obedient servant,

“ GABRIELE CESANO.

“ From Rome, April 20th, 1525.”

Giovanni was meanwhile recovering from his wound at Piacenza, whither he had been transported by water, after having been carried off the

field at Pavia. Here he received news from his faithful treasurer, Francesco degli Albizzi, of his soldiers, and his horses, especially his *leardo bono*, which had carried him safely through the last skirmish before Pavia. But the troops, he is informed, are asking for their pay. This had been due to them under the last Pontificate of Adrian VI., in whose pay they were ; but Giovanni never received any supplies from the Vatican, as one of his letters testify, in which he urges upon Francesco degli Albizzi to obtain them before the election of a new Pope. But no money had been forthcoming then, and now the arrears had accumulated. The ruin of the French cause made all hopes of pay from that quarter out of the question, moreover Giovanni, as has been seen, had himself destroyed the contract by which Francis I. agreed to pay him a pension.

Affairs were in this desperate condition when Maria Salviati, by a most extraordinary display both of discernment and courage, came forward to relieve them.

She had fully fathomed the duplicity of Pope Clement VII., and had warned her husband not to attach himself again to the Papal cause.

“There will be no Popes like those who are gone;” she wrote, alluding to Leo X. “Will not V. S. cease to be at the beck and call of others?” she pleads, “but come home and attend to his own concerns, now that there is time, and God alone knows the future. Remember Papa Leone, and how suddenly he died.” And more in the same strain; but she does not fail to end her letter with the prayer that “*Messer Domenidio* will give him happiness and victory.”

Events having proved that her fears had been too well-grounded, she determined to seek the only remedy in a personal application to the Pope. With rare intrepidity she went herself to Rome, with her infant son, and having obtained an audience, she made her supplication to His Holiness to relieve her husband from his difficulties. “The demands upon him,” she urged, “will devour what little patrimony remains, and unless your Holiness

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comes to his rescue, there is no other quarter from whence we can look for help."

So much courage deserved success, and six thousand ducats, out of the Papal coffers, were the immediate result of her visit, with a promise of buying her husband an estate. "As to their son, Cosimo," Maria Salviati writes, "the Pope and the Archbishop of Capua" (at that time the supreme ruler of the Pope's counsels) "had sent for him, and had made him *tutte le carezze del Mondo*."\*

But when the promised estate proved to be Fano, on the sea-board of the Adriatic, the farthest extremity from Florence that could be suggested by the Pope's persistent and vigilant jealousy, the suspicions of Maria Salviati were again aroused. A second time she warns her husband against the Pope and his favouritism, for his nephews, Ippolito and Alessandro, "boys of fifteen and sixteen, more fit to be sent to school than to govern Florence to

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\* The portraits of Maria Salviati and the infant, Cosimo, are also painted by Vasari in the Sala dedicated to the celebration of her husband's triumphs.

Vasari Scritti Minori, Vol. VIII. p. 187.

the prejudice of her husband and his son. It is on their account that the Pope encourages his roving, adventurous life, so as to keep him out of the sight of the Signoria of Florence."

The suspicions of Maria Salviati were well founded. The Pope feared and hated Giovanni de' Medici. He knew that, although of the younger branch, Giovanni was in reality the only legitimate representative of his name, and that this fact, when taken in conjunction with his great military fame, gave him a double claim upon the regard of the Florentines. The Pope was therefore ready to purchase his absence from the city at any price, and the Papal coffers were again unlocked to provide the dreaded rival with funds for ships, and largesse for his troops. An expedition against Ancona was planned to keep him fully occupied on that side of the Peninsula, and Giovanni fell into the snare laid for him by the astute Pontiff.

Still there remained one more page to be turned in the life of the warrior Medici, the most brilliant and the last. The surmise of his faithful follower,

that out of the ashes of an extinguished hope a hundred new ones would kindle into life was fulfilled, when, into the midst of the chaos in Italy, there flashed, though but for an instant, the light of national independence.

To Machiavelli, who was watching the times with the concentrated thoughts of which his writings remain as an everlasting testimonial, it seemed as if Giovanni de' Medici was destined to be the ideal *Dux* of the *Divina Commedia*, the *cinquecento deci e cinque Messo di Dio*, who was to be the saviour of his country.\*

The idea was first suggested to him by a rumour current in Florence, that Giovanni was about to raise a *Bandiera di Ventura*, to make war where he pleased, and on his own account.

“This rumour,” Machiavelli writes to Guicciardini, “set me thinking whether the popular voice had not suggested the right course. I believe everyone is of opinion that in all Italy there is no leader the soldiers would more willingly follow

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\*D. V. X., *La Divina Commedia*, Purg XXXIII., 43, 44.

than Giovanni de' Medici, nor any one of whom the Spaniards have a greater awe. Then everyone knows Il Signor Giovanni to be a man of undaunted courage, large ideas, and ready for any great enterprise. Would it not be well secretly to increase his power by giving him the command of as many horse and foot as can be supplied, so as to induce him to raise his banner?"\*

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It was a scheme worthy of a great politician, and it would have been well for Italy had it been adopted. There would not then have been the previous failure of the *Congiura di Morone* suggested by the more diplomatic Guicciardini.

A politician of a later date has observed, "Refined policy ever has been the parent of confusion, and ever will be so as long as the world endures."†

We find an illustration of this remark in the

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\* Opere di Machiavelli, Vol. VIII., p. 479; see also Villari, "*Niccolò Machiavelli e i suoi Tempi*," Vol. III. p. 335.

† Burke, Vol. III., 31. Speech on Conciliation with America.



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failure of the tentative, subtle policy, which sought to compass the same end by bribing the ambition of the Imperial general, Pescara, with the prospect of the kingdom of Naples. Pescara, half tempted for a moment, recollected that the favour of Cesar was certain, the future of Italy chimerical. Morone was betrayed to his ruin, and in the midst of the confusion of the discovery Pescara died. The Emperor's wrath was arrested by this fatality in full tide, and Italy gained a moment's breathing time.

All Italy was implicated in the conspiracy which had failed. There was no resource left but to fight.

The Holy League was formed, with the Pope at the head, and composed of the Republics of Venice and Florence, Francesco Storza, Duke of Milan, and backed by Francis I., who, having recovered his liberty, scattered to the winds the Treaty of Madrid, and eagerly embraced the opportunity of retrieving the defeat of Pavia.

The object of the League was to drive the

Emperor out of Italy, and the Spaniards out of Naples, change the government of Genoa, and secure Italy from foreign interference.

Here was some approach to the idea of national independence, but the reality was lost in the dim horizon of distant centuries, when Italy, having at last learnt that her deliverance must come from within, would have ceased to apply to any foreign potentate to support her cause.

In the instance before us, it is again under Francis I. that Giovanni de' Medici takes the field, with a salary of twelve thousand scudi, and the command of the Italian infantry, with the additional corps of nine hundred cavalry.

Such a command was the crown of his military career—the recognition of his fame as a warrior, as a leader of undaunted valour and unswerving determination, whose laurels had never been tarnished by personal ambition.

From the correspondence we may infer that the horses for the cavalry had been provided at his own cost.

“Look for horses everywhere,” he writes to his treasurer; “buy them of everyone; whenever you see a good horse get it, and send them all on at once, without a day’s delay.”

Maria Salviati, who never failed her husband in the hour of need, wrote from Florence, “that whatever her lord wants she begs he will let her know, that she may supply him with arms and *chavali* to the utmost of her power.” Perhaps infected with the martial spirit of the time, and the general stir of arms in Italy, she adds a message to Luc Antonio Cuppano, her husband’s favourite captain and *cameriere*, to request him to purchase a dagger for her boy. “*Comprate uno pugnale per Cosimo.*” \*

Meanwhile, the faithful steward, Francesco Suasio, sends mules laden according to the accompanying inventory, but the swords, “*a dua mane,*” are not to be found though they have searched everywhere.

Throughout the last campaign, Milan had

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\* Copied from Autograph.

ever been the centre of the struggle, and the army of the League again laid siege to the city. Hard pressed, and exasperated by the extortions of the Imperialist troops, the citizens made but a faint resistance; the Captains of the League, sure of success, were prepared to carry it by assault, when the Duca d' Urbino, who commanded the Papal forces, for some unaccountable reason, possibly a wish to revenge upon Clement VII. the cruel treatment he had experienced under Leo X., withdrew the whole of his troops. Nor would he be deterred, either by the remonstrance of the Venetian Provveditore, or the indignation of Giovanni de' Medici, who had reconnoitred the city, had made ready for the assault by planting artillery before the Porta Romana, and had, in short, disposed everything for an easy and complete victory.

In the dead of the night, the Duke of Urbino withdrew his troops, leaving a large gap in the forces of the League.

Giovanni would not move from the spot till

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the day broke, when he had to meet alone the attack of the Imperial forces, commanded by Antonio da Leiva, Bourbon, and il Marchese di Vasto, who, having heard of the defection of the Duca d' Urbino, hastened to harry the retreat of the forces which remained with Giovanni de' Medici. For ten miles along the straight road, from Milan to Marignano, Giovanni conducted a splendid retreat, facing his foes every inch of the way, from time to time making onslaughts upon them, and remaining ever in person at the post of danger.

The effect of the retreat of the army of the League was to throw Milan into the hands of the Imperialist forces. Too late to prevent this catastrophe, the Duca d' Urbino allowed the allied army to return under its walls, and continued, by his want of zeal, to paralyse the joint action of the army, and to render ineffectual the skirmishes with the Spaniards, in which Giovanni and his *Bande Nere* maintained, by feats of extraordinary prowess, a military reputation which had

already, as we have seen from the testimony of Machiavelli, sufficiently inspired them with awe.

One of these feats of surpassing strength is, taken historically, the last exploit represented by Vasari in the Sala, specially dedicated to the warrior's honour.\* It is described by the painter himself: "*Qui è quando il Signor Giovanni in campo aperto passò da banda a banda quel cavaliere spagnuolo armato di tutt' armi dove come la vede con grandissimo stupore delli spettatori mostra il tronco della lancia esserli rimasto in mano.*"\*

But to Giovanni, who held the true soldier's axiom, that: "*per nissuna speranza o disegno la vittoria dovrebbe esser differita,*" the enforced inaction of the troops, when victory had been within their grasp, was so intolerable, that he asked the Pope for another command. This we gather from a letter of Guicciardini, of this date, who urges in reply that, "His (Giovanni's) removal from the seat of war would take the heart out of the enterprise in which His Holiness

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\* Vasari Scritti Minori. Vol. viii., p. 186.

takes so deep an interest ; that it would arouse the suspicions of his Majesty, the King, and the Venetians, and be, therefore, most prejudicial to His Holiness. I beg V. S. to await quietly the orders from Rome, with a disposition to acquiesce in them, because in the hour of danger as well as in the hour of triumph, it is reasonable that His Holiness should look for greater support from his own blood than from strangers, and there is no support to be compared with that which can be rendered by your Highness.

“Some change from France may shortly be expected which may hurry on the campaign, and in that case V. S. will be glad not to have abandoned the enterprise ; or His Holiness will give another turn to affairs which will set V. S. free to leave the field. Everything must be made plain within a few days.

“DI. V. S. FRANCESCO GUICCIARDINI.

“Piacenza, Oct. 9th, 1526.”

The Pope was, as usual, playing a double game ;

his perfidy had already alienated the Duke of Ferrara, with what fatal result to the army of the League will hereafter be seen.

Meanwhile the expected change took the form of fast approaching peril in the descent of reinforcements from Germany, under the celebrated Hungarian captain, George Frandsberg, who lined with his troops the right bank of the Mincio, within eight miles of Mantua.

Giovanni de' Medici was instantly ordered to lead his *Bande Nere* to the front, for he was the only warrior, on the side of the League, of courage as undaunted as that of the redoubted adversary, whose advent had spread a panic through the army. Giovanni attacked him in the plain of Governolo, and for four days held in check the advance of the enemy, so that their losses amounted to four thousand before they could reach the banks of the Po, where they expected a reinforcement of artillery from Alfonso d' Este Duca di Ferrara. The scene is described with great vigour by a contemporary Venetian Poet—



Falugi dell' Incisa—a pupil of the school of Ariosto, who, in the spirited metre of the Ottava rima, brings the battle-field before our eyes.\*

“ Last, noblest standard, flutt’ring to the sky,  
 Is yonder borne by Medici’s proud knight ;  
 From gold and purple changed to sable dye,  
 When Leo’s star was lost in death’s dark night.  
 Fast clust’ring ’neath it see the soldiers stand,  
 Eager to follow if their leader lead ;  
 Black troops of Tuscany, a fearless band—  
 Death, not dishonour, in one word their creed.

“ *L’ultima fu la principal bandiera,  
 Che per se tien el Medice barone ;  
 Che di purpura e d’oro si mutò in nera,  
 Che del mondo uscìl divo Leone.  
 E sotto questi in arme raccolta era,  
 De’ gentil Toschi ogni forte nazione ;  
 E puè tanto, e, nelle fation sicura,  
 Più facile morir ch’ aver paura.*

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\* The Italian, never having been modernized, and the meaning being consequently in some places obscure, the writer has endeavoured to render it by translation, and has transferred this to the text, leaving the original for reference in the note.

" Black is the mighty armour, black the shield,  
 The noble limbs all cased in sable sheath ;  
 Alas ! what armour is there but must yield  
 Before the unerring, piercing dart of death ?  
 From the dark helm flash forth the youthful fires,  
 And mantling colour rich with healthful glow—  
 White against black to purest white aspires,  
 As in dark cavern lies the pearl of snow.

*" Tutta era negra l'armadura forte  
 Che della testa al piè gli cuopre 'l dosso  
 Nè contro ahimè la spada della morte  
 Non giova elmetto temperato e grosso  
 In queste spoglie scure di tal sorte  
 Si vedel viso suo candido e rosso  
 Or del candor celato in color tetro  
 Par bianca perla cinta in nero eletto.*

" Nature, I know not if thy lavish hand,  
 Endowed him most with outward gifts and show ;  
 Or, greatest yet, thy touch of magic wand,  
 Which bade the lamp of faith within him glow ;  
 Or equal both with nice adjustment true,  
 'Twere hard to say which balance turned the scale ;  
 Where every gift its own perfection threw,  
 Vied each with each but yet could none prevail.

“ *Qual non so se più prodiga Nature  
 Fè'gli mostro nel crearlo formoso  
 O più dote gli diè di fede pura  
 O più el fece robusto e animoso  
 O se tanto gliel diè di pari misura  
 Ch' en quel che gli excedessi sia dubioso  
 Tal ch' ogni parte se degna per sua opera  
 Di precede al altre e porsi sopra.*

“ The belted sword hangs ever by his side,  
 'Gainst which how vain both hawberk and cuirass !  
 Firm in his grasp the ashen spear, well tried,  
 Whose deadly thrust through stoutest mail will pass ;  
 And of his strength immortal record made,  
 When in fair field it pierced the Spanish knight ;  
 Nor had he longer with us mortals stayer,  
 Would lighter deeds than this have graced the fight.

“ *Et la fulminea spada portat fianco  
 Contra la qual non val lorica o sbergo  
 In man un h'asta tien di fraxin anticho  
 Ch' ogni durarne segna con suo mergo  
 Di quella che già roppe Alidra al tergo  
 E se più stessi fra mortali disopra  
 Non sarebbe di quella minor opra.*

“And forth he rode a noble Turkish steed,  
 Surpassing all that e'er were swift of pace ;  
 Hirpinian, Samnite, or what other breed  
 Have ever speed along the eager race.  
 Heedless of curb, and pransing for the fight,  
 The iron grip can scarce his zeal restrain—  
 Now chafes, now pulls, and now with dauntless might  
 Swims the swift stream, or springs upon the plain.”

*“ Cavalca un dextro e fiero caval Turco  
 Che per veloce corso già non crede  
 A figli di Saunio Hirpinio, Astuco  
 O, a qual altro sia leggier di piede,  
 Ne rafrena appena lo può parco  
 La dura man quando in furor procede  
 E tira, morde, e urte, e fa tal guerra  
 Se nuota in acqua, che salta in terra.”*

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Several stanzas describe the onslaught of the German troops.

“Onward they press, the Medici their mark,  
 His form the target for their every shot ;  
 Thick round him roll the battle-clouds and dark ;  
 Fierce the fight rages, fast the fray and hot.

‘ Pursue him, seize him, strike the gallant crest,  
Stretch those strong limbs in death a senseless  
corse!’

Himself once vanquished, they have won the rest ;  
A terror to his foes—his country’s fire and force.”

“ *Nel Medice Barone tutte le punte  
Ogni arcobuso rivoltate presto,  
Tien in lui sol tutte l’arme congiunte  
Seguite sempre lui, ferite questo.  
Che poste in terra sue membra defonte  
Non ce fatica ad vincer ogni resto  
Dunque ogni dextra forte in quel si voggia  
Ch’a noi terror, a suoi fidanza foggia.*”

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Mars watches the Fates spinning the threads  
of the house of Medici, and asks Lachesis which  
is the one she holds in her hand.

“ This thread, which, slipping, I can scarcely hold,  
As thou perceivest,’ Lachesis replied,  
‘ Is brave Giovanni’s life, alas, now told !  
Lo, where Eridanus smooth waters slide,

Hard pressed he leads the oft-repeated fight ;  
 And four times scatt'ring the German horde,  
 Bids his dark standard glow with fame's pure light—  
 And with last valour wields his trusted sword.' ”

“ *Quel fil che già non posso più tenere,  
 Come tu vedi (Lachesi risponde)  
 È l'inclito Giovanni, ch'or tue schiere  
 Conduce presso al Eridane sponde ;  
 Quel forte duce che l'ensegne nere  
 Di fama fa sì candide e gioconde  
 Quel che l'infeste e barbaro phalange  
 L'ultimo dì sì valoroso frange.*”

It was then, at Borgoforte, on the fourth day, when the tide of the battle had swept towards the banks of the Po, that a great vessel from Ferrara brought up the expected artillery. The first shot produced a fatal effect, for it struck Giovanni in the leg already wounded before Pavia. He fell,

“ *Et cascando, cascò d'Italia insieme  
 Animo, forza, fè, letitia, e speme.*”\*

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\*“ He fell, and falling, with him also fall  
 Italia's strength, faith, joy, hope, courage—all.”

They bore him off the field, attended by the beloved friend, Pietro Aretino, who had been with him throughout the campaign, and Luc Antonio Cuppano, his favourite captain, and they made for Mantua.

There had been a feud between the Gonzaga and the Medici, but on this occasion all was forgotten but the wish to help the great hero of Italy in his sore need. The Marchese insisted upon receiving him in his own palace, and came out himself to meet him.

“Sire,” said the wounded man, “in the midst of my misfortune I have yet cause to congratulate myself if it has brought me here, where, if I must die, it will not be as the enemy of Vossignoria Illus<sup>mo</sup>. to whom I have ever been a devoted servant.”

The Marchese lodged him in the palace with every honour, and the Duca d’ Urbino arrived in haste that evening from the battlefield.

Giovanni called for Luc Antonio Cuppano, that he might say to him with a smile, “It is not for such

as you to leave the battle and stand by a sick bed." He asked also for his nephew, the Conte di San Secondo, saying, that if he were there he could take command of the Bande Nere. Meanwhile, after anxious consultation, the doctors imposed upon Pietro Aretino the task of telling the wounded man that amputation of the injured limb could alone save his life. They were fortunate in their choice, for Pietro knew better than any one how to introduce the terrible subject. Addressing himself to Giovanni,

"Let them take away the havoc made by the artillery," he said, "and in eight days' time you will be able to make Italy, now a servant, a queen; and your loss of limb will be like the order of merit you have always desired to receive from the king to wear round your neck, because wounds and loss of limbs are the orders and medals of the votaries of Mars."

"Let them begin at once," replied Giovanni.

The surgeons stood by the bed. They looked at the heroic strength of the prostrate man, and they



said that ten men must hold him or the operation could not be performed.

“Twenty would not suffice if that were necessary,” answered Giovanni; and taking the candle, he held it himself, with unshaking hand, during the whole time of the amputation which, alas! for their ignorance of surgical science, was not only performed, with unheeding roughness, by a Jew of the name of Abram, but was also ineffectual as the injured part was not removed.

Pietro Aretino, who had fled from the room with his hands to his ears, a precaution rendered unnecessary by the heroism of the sufferer, was recalled by the voice of Giovanni, who laughed at the anguish depicted on his countenance, and told him he was already cured. But in a few hours it became evident that the operation had been unsuccessful. Mortification set in, and there was no longer any hope of saving the life of the great warrior. Nor, in this last extremity, did his courage desert him. He made his confession, and he made his will, distributing large gifts of money to his

soldiers, to whom also he addressed these farewell words :—

“Soldiers,

“You know with what affection and zeal I have maintained you in my service, trained you to be my followers, and instructed you in arms, sharing every peril with you : Now that I am come to my end, the only way in which I desire to live in your recollection, the only favour I would ask of you is, that you will have my honour always before you. This I know I may expect of you even after I am dead ; and that in all your campaigns you will keep it untarnished, remembering that in the worst of perils it is better for a soldier to die than to show the smallest sign of fear.”\*

His host remained by his bedside during the day, and Giovanni, mastering his anguish, discussed the chances of the war. He expressed a wish that Madonna Maria would send him his son Cosimo ; and towards nightfall, as the agony increased, he

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\**Rossi. Vita di Giovanni delle Bande Nere ; p. 49.*

asked his faithful Pietro to lull him to sleep with reading. After a quarter of an hour's sleep he woke again: "I was dreaming of making my will," he said, "and, look! I am cured—I feel no pain. If I go on like this I shall yet be able to show the Germans how to fight."

It was the last flash of the lamp of life, and in another minute he was aware of it himself, for he asked for the extreme unction, and having received it, he said, "I will not die in this sick-bed," and desired to be removed into a camp-bed where he fell asleep, and in his sleep died.

Such was the end of the great Giovanni de' Medici.

The events of his career seem to have filled a lifetime, but he had not even reached the prime of manhood when his life was cut short in the twenty-ninth year of his age.

For some reason, possibly the danger of traveling in those troubled times, possibly the brief interval which elapsed between the wound and his death, Madonna Maria was not with him when

he died. Posterity is, however, indebted to this circumstance for two remarkable letters, which complete the private, as well as the public, history of the great warrior. When the details, cited above, had been faithfully transmitted to the widow by the friend who had witnessed her husband's last painful hours,

“Signora,” he adds, “I will not pretend to rival your sorrow, though I could dispute the palm in grieving over the loss of your husband with any other living person, but from you, the wife, I cannot hope to win it, because in the loss of a consort the strongest and most overpowering grief must ever remain with the survivor; nor is that the only reason why my grief cannot take precedence of yours, because the habit of self-command which you had acquired of accustoming yourself to bear his long and necessary absence, had given a stability and constancy to your affection for him, which in me was weak from never having been able for one hour, one minute, or one second, to tear myself from him.

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“ His virtues are better known to me than to you, I having always witnessed them, you having always heard of them from me. There is no doubt that the actual witness of the eyes brings greater gratification than the reports carried by fame, therefore my passion must give place to your endurance. Such pre-eminence is due to the wisdom and courage which you have ever shown. . . . But allow me the second place in grief, for it has reached such a pass in my heart that I feel it can know none greater, for I thought I should have died when I saw him draw his last breath ; when I saw Giulio Raffaello take the cast of the countenance ; and when I myself put him into his coffin. But the comfort which sustained me was the thought of his everlasting fame, and of the public recognition of his greatness, these will be the ornaments and jewels of your widowhood. The recital of his great deeds has not only distracted my grief, but has filled me with joy ; and it thrills my heart to hear, in the highest quarters, that, with his death,

have simultaneously died—a miracle of nature, the most finished example of ancient chivalry, the right arm of battle.” \*

The answer to this remarkable letter has been also preserved. It is equally striking, and deserves to be cited at full length.

“Messer Pietro diletissimo,” writes Madonna Maria, “in answer to your sad letter, written in the utmost tribulation, I reply that, if the death of my lord and husband grieves you, you have good cause for your sorrow, having enjoyed for so long a time intimate and continued converse with him, having known the nobility of his soul, his liberality, and his many virtues. Reflecting deeply upon this and that “*cum nihil in terra sine causa fiat*,” I do not believe this friendship to have been the work of chance, but a Divine dispensation, ordained in order that his merit *non pereat cum sonitu, sed vivat in perpetuum*. I am certain, I repeat, that his death, so untimely, so unexpected, grieves you,

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\* *La Vita e le Gesta di Giovanni de' Medici, da Mini, p. 274.*

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and if it grieves you, think how it pierces my soul and my heart, and causes me so bitter a pang that I know there is no consolation in this world to relieve it, and therefore, if it were not for the conviction that the great God gave you to him for an esquire-at-arms in order that you might bear witness to his renown, I should now, to say the truth, be in my grave. For my sake, then, do not shrink from undertaking the task, even if you think it beyond your powers, still carry it forward without discouragement or fear, because, I assure you, that it is generally known that there is neither pen nor skill equal to yours. I should be quite satisfied if you would describe that which you have yourself seen and handled of the life of his "*Invitta Eccellentia.*" So, if you wish to comfort me, describe in whatever way seems to you most fitting the fourteen years during which he so bravely fought, and I will undertake the other fourteen years beginning from his cradle, with the help of the one [probably her father, Jacopo Salviati], who brought him up, and observed from his

earliest childhood signs in him which prognosticated his invincible and noble character, and all that he so gloriously accomplished up to the last day of his life. If you wish to lighten in any degree my grief, write, I entreat you, for be sure that I can have no heart to live unless I have the solace of reading the account of his noble qualities and great deeds, and I, together with my orphan boy, will be for ever indebted to you, an obligation, which ever present to us, we will not fail to acknowledge.

“I thank you for your letter and sonnets, and for all you have done for us, and obtained for us, from His Excellency, the Marchese Gonzaga, entreating you to continue to recommend us—myself and my poor Cosimo—with unfailing diligence to the favour of S. S. Illustrissima.

“To yourself I remain for ever indebted.

“Florence, December 23, 1526.

“I had omitted to mention, but now I ask and implore you to obtain for me a cast of my beloved husband, the head at all events, either in clay or plaster, and so wrap it that it may travel to me



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safely, and with all speed. And again I urge you, if you wish me well, to send me the first attempt, because it will certainly be the most true to life, and I will pay all the cost, whatever it may be.

“ Yours always, as a sister,

“ MARIA SALVIATI DE’ MEDICI.” \*

From the foregoing letters it would seem as if no man could have had greater opportunities of forming an estimate of the character of Giovanni de’ Medici than Pietro Aretino, and that his testimony can be trusted when he dilates upon the generosity of a disposition “than which more greater has never yet been seen, a liberality so large that he gave away to his soldiers more than he ever kept for himself. Fatigue and hardships he endured with the greatest patience. He esteemed men according to their value, not according to their wealth. In the battlefield he wore no distinguishing mark of his rank, so that by his [conspicuous] valour alone could he be singled out from the

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\* Ibid, p. 278.

Bande Nere ; but he held the key to the hearts of his soldiers by his well-known saying, ‘ In the hour of peril I do not expect you to lead, but to follow me.’ He was ever the first to mount, and the last to dismount, from his horse. He was always better than his word in action, but in council he never traded on his great reputation. So great was his natural gift for the strategy and art of warfare that in night marches he could rectify any mistake of the scouts who were reconnoitring for the army, and put them on the right track ; and no man understood more perfectly than he did the method of laying an ambuscade, or leading an attack. He had a wonderful art of governing his soldiers, now by love, and now by fear ; he could lead them anywhere. Of all things he held indolence most in horror. There is no doubt that his disposition was naturally virtuous, his vices the faults only of youth, so that, had it pleased God to give him a longer life, everyone would have been as convinced of his goodness as I am myself. It is certain that in depth of affection he could

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surpass the most affectionate heart. Fame, not personal advantage, was the goal he placed before him. . . . In short, many may envy him, but none can imitate him. Florence and Rome will soon see what it is to have lost him, and already I seem to hear the cries of despair of a certain great man, who chooses to think now that he has gained by this loss.

“ Di Mantova,

“ A. M. Francesco degli Albizzi.”\*

The allusion at the end of the letter is, of course, intended for the Pope and his known jealousy of the great warrior, and the prophecy as to the “cries of despair” were literally fulfilled, when a prisoner in San Angelo, with Rome burning under his feet, the Pope found cause to repent in sackcloth and ashes the loss of the strong arm which alone could have saved the city from being sacked by the Imperialist army.

Machiavelli ascribes to this same persistent

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\* Ibid, p. 269, 70, 71.

jealousy the aimlessness of a life, which, with such noble qualities, might have developed into something greater than a military commander, great as he was in that capacity, in fact: "*Un Prode che di consiglio ebbe pochi pari, di gagliardia pochissimi, e di ardire nessuno,*" and he concludes by pointing out the complete failure of the attempt to crush the claims of Giovanni as a representative of the house of Medici, for from him actually was derived the second era of their power, exceeding in greatness and splendour any which had preceded it.

Another contemporary testimony, gathered from an old manuscript, clears the character of Giovanni from an imputation of cruelty, partly due to a misconception of the title, "*Bande Nere,*" which he gave to his troops, and which was supposed to be derived from deeds similar to those of "*Black Sir Roderick,*" and not from the mourning accoutrements, worn, in the first instance out of respect to the memory of Leo X., worn, afterwards, and never discarded, for their great leader himself.

“By many,” says the old chronicle, “he was considered cruel, but not seldom is fortitude travestied with the harsh name of ferocity; and it must be remembered that his anger was never roused without a just cause, and that, except on such occasions, he was as docile and easy of guidance as the gentlest woman. He was ever prompt to serve his friends, courteous and liberal beyond all belief. His nature was incapable of conceit; he was the soul of honour, with a disposition of pellucid sincerity, because he was wont to say that dissimulation was a sign of cowardice.”

We find in the contemporary poem, written in his eulogy, a stanza dedicated to this special trait on his character.

“Ne'er did the countenance belie the mind,  
Nor word and deed a diverse tale relate;  
Nor, as not seldom in these days, we find  
A double-headed Janus o'er the gate.  
Only true joy can wreath his face with light,  
Only true grief the heartfelt sigh compels,

Plain as a book, who runs may read aright,  
By outward signs the soul that inward dwells.”\*

Such being the collected testimony of contemporary opinion in favour of the greatest warrior of the age, it remains for posterity to compare him with others who have since trod in his footsteps the path of military fame.

A likeness between the portrait of Giovanni de' Medici and that of Napoleon Buonaparte has given emphasis to a parallel, already perhaps sufficiently obvious, between the two men, and we find that the comparatively untaught *Condottiero* of those fierce times stands the test of comparison, both as a soldier and a general, with the idol of military glory of a more civilised period.

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“ *Non fu contrario l'animo dal viso  
Nel fatto dissentì dalle parole  
Non fu qual Jano in dua face diviso  
Come esser hoggi la più parte suole  
Sanza vera letizia non fè 'riso  
Sanza vero dolor, fuor non li duole  
Ma sempre vide in lui che mirò attento  
Pe' luoghi exteriori tutto el di dentro.*”

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Where Napoleon, to further his own personal ambition, was reckless of human life, Giovanni, free from any such motive, esteemed the lives of his soldiers more highly than his own, and would expose them to no peril in which he was not himself foremost. His generalship was not only conspicuous when the "sun of Austerlitz" shone for triumphant victory, but also in the hour of defeat and loss, when conducting a retreat through the dark hours of night, himself ever at the post of danger, covering with feats of undaunted personal valour the orderly withdrawal of his troops.

We cannot imagine him leaving his *Bande Nere* to perish on the plains of Moscow, or standing a passive spectator of the last charge of the Old Guard at Waterloo.

But in the character of the great rival of Buonaparte there is a point of resemblance to that of Giovanni delle *Bande Nere*, very distinctly brought out by the comparison of a passage from the contemporary poem already cited, with the eloquent tribute to the Duke of Wellington from the pen of

his contemporary poet, Sir Francis Doyle. When the two passages are placed side by side, the same thought will be found, conveyed in very nearly the same terms.

*“ Et bella fede inviolata e santa  
 H'ebbe tal forza in generoso peto  
 Ch'el parthico oro, quel che Cresò vanta  
 Nè comodo, timor, o proprio affeto  
 Potette mai distorce la sua pianta  
 O deviarla d'ál tramite reto  
 E fu con tutti secondo el diurario  
 O fido amico o molesto adversario,”\**

“ He was by all beloved, but less because  
 His sword had triumphed in his country's cause,  
 Than that men knew  
 His life was true.

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\*“ Fair was his faith, immaculate and true,  
 Firm his great heart, indiff'rent to gold,  
 In vain may Parthia or Cræsus woo  
 By hope of gain, or fear, or wealth untold.  
 Still his swift steps pursue the onward race,  
 Nor turn aside from Honour's narrow strait;  
 To all as certain as the dial's plate,  
 His love as friend, or, as a foe, his hate.”



That when he saw his duty, power and pelf,  
 All lust of glory, and all thoughts of self,  
     Away like dross he threw ;  
 That, nor ambition's lures, nor wounded pride,  
 Nor malice of unjust rebuke,  
 From honour's instant path could turn aside  
     One footmark of the Iron Duke.'\*\*

On this common ground, such soldiers, alike of all times, all ages, and all nations, may meet and join hands. There is, moreover, in the modern poem, living witness to the fact that honour is not less highly esteemed in the practical nineteenth than in the fifteenth century, when the flame of chivalry, leaping high in the socket before it was forever extinguished, prompted the pen of Giovanni to write, "*L'onore é la cosa la più preziosa ch'io abbia al mondo,*" inspired the memorable message from the field of Pavia ; and, for England, has been for ever enshrined in the lines :

"The purest treasure mortal times afford  
 Is spotless reputation ; that away,  
 Men are but gilded loam or painted clay.

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\*The Duke's Funeral.—Poems by Sir F. H. Doyle, p. 201.

A jewel in a ten times barred up chest  
Is a bold spirit in a loyal breast ;  
Mine honour is my life, both grow in one,  
Take honour from me, and my life is done.”\*

From the Palace of the Gonzaga, where he died, the dead warrior, cased in full armour, was borne shoulder high by his companions in arms through Mantua to the Dominican Church of S. Francesco. He was followed by the Marchese Gonzaga, with all his court and crowds of people, “while the women,” adds Pietro Aretino, with a fine touch of sympathy for the widowed Maria Salviati, “gazed from the windows with awe and reverence upon the heroic form of him who was your husband, signora, and my lord : for never did a nobler warrior lie stretched upon a bier.”

The narrative does not mention whether the faithful charger also followed his dead master, thereby adding the last touch of pathos to the soldier’s funeral. But there is a record that his favourite horse, “Sultano,” which had carried him

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\*King Richard II., Act I., Scene I.

through the battle till the fatal shot was fired, never carried any other rider, but, becoming thinner, day by day, after the loss of his master, pined away and died.\*

The inscription in the sacristy of the church,

JOANNES MEDICES HIC SITUS EST  
 INUSITATÆ VIRTUTIS DUX  
 QUI AD MINCIUM TORMENTO ICTUS  
 ITALIA FATO POTIUS QUAM SUO  
 CECIDIT—MDXXVI.,†

marked for a century and a half the first resting-place of the great warrior in Mantua.

In Florence, it was the earliest care of his son, Cosimo, when he became Grand Duke of Tuscany, to record upon a marble slab in the sacristy of San Lorenzo, the brief inscription :

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\**Elogi di Uomini Illustri*, vol. ii. 381.

† “ Here is laid Giovanni de’ Medici, a leader of extraordinary valour ; who, on the Mincio, by an arquebus shot,—a blow to the destiny of Italy rather than his own—fell—1526.”

[Supplied to the writer by Padre Niccolò Anziani, Canonico di San Lorenzo.]

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 JOHANNES MEDICES

COGNOMENTO INVICTUS

COSMI I. MAGNI DUCIS ETRURIÆ PATER,\*

and to raise a monument to his father's memory, which has since become the prominent feature of the Piazza San Lorenzo.

The base of the *Mausoleo*, or more properly the *Cenotaph*, is adorned with sculptures by Baccio Bandinelli, intended, like the paintings of Vasari, to represent, in the same semi-allegorical manner, the triumphs of "Giovanni de' Medici, detto l'Invitto, Capitano delle Bande Nere." For a long time the pedestal remained without the statue of the warrior himself, which has been recently put in the position it now occupies, having, in the first instance, been rejected on the plea that warriors should never be represented seated unless the statue is destined for the inside of a church.†

But in 1685, Cosimo III., not content with the

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\*Giovanni de' Medici, surnamed the Invincible. Father of Cosimo I., Grand Duke of Tuscany.

† *L'Osservatore Fiorentino*. Vol. vi., pp. 30, 31.

cenotaph, and jealous that Mantua should possess the actual remains of his famous ancestor, gave directions that they should be transported to Florence.

Here they were received, with due solemnity, by the Secretary of State, and deposited beside the Princes and Princesses of the great house to which the warrior belonged, in the Cappella Medici of the Church of San Lorenzo, where art, at the bidding of Michael Angelo, has raised to the family a monument which must live so long as night follows day, and the sunset succeeds the sunrise.

Yet once again the remains of the warrior were destined to be disturbed.

In 1857 the Grand Duke, Leopold II., having been informed that at the time of the French occupation of Florence many of the Medici coffins had been broken open for the purpose of stealing the gold and ornaments which they were known to contain, issued an order that all, and they were forty-nine in number, should be examined and attested.

A written description of the condition of each coffin was taken down before the remains were removed into a new case, with a plate giving to each the proper name and date, and ultimately all were consigned to an honoured resting-place under the Medici Chapel, designed by Emilio di Fabris, the architect of the new Facade of the Duomo.

The body, or rather the skeleton, of Giovanni delle Bande Nere still lay cased in the black armour, with the helmet on the head, perfect except where the bone of the leg furnished indisputable evidence as to the double injury to the limb, broken first of all at the shin before Pavia, and afterwards completely severed, the jagged marks of the saw upon the bone remaining, after a lapse of three centuries, as silent witnesses to the warrior's heroism. \*

It was a pious act, worthy of the last Grand

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\* For these remarkable particulars the writer is indebted to the Marchese Mario Covoni, who, as *Regio Luogotenente* of the Basilica of San Lorenzo to the late Grand Duke, was on guard at the time, and an eyewitness of the whole ceremony.

Duke of Tuscany, so to revere the memory of his great ancestor, and

“ Though to the worms’ surrendered prey  
These rights and honours thus to pay.” \*

But let death,

“ *Dispietata e rea,  
Pallida in vita, orribile e superba  
Che ’l lume di beltate spento avea,*”

have a triumph, it can be but brief, for these are the occasions when close upon the footsteps of death there follows fame,

“ *Quella  
Che trae l’uom del Sepolcro  
E’n Vita il serba.*” †

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\* The Duke’s Funeral. Poems, by Sir F. H. Doyle ; p. 191.

† Trionfo della Fama, Cap. I., Rime del Petrarca.  
Compare also Ariosto Orlando Furioso, C. VII., S. XXXV.





REVIEWS OF A PREVIOUS WORK BY THE SAME AUTHOR.

“*Studies in Italian Literature.*”

CLASSICAL AND MODERN.

SAMPSON, LOW & CO., 188, FLEET STREET, LONDON.



THE ATHENÆUM.—*Studies in Italian Literature.* By Catherine Mary Phillimore.—A very pretty subject for a prize essay would be an inquiry into the reasons for the interest which the study of Italian literature has always aroused in this country. Many more people can speak and read French or German than Italian; and on the whole there is much more in French certainly, if not in German, that is worth reading. France and Germany, too, have, to all appearance, come into far closer contact with England in the course of history than has Italy. Yet it was to Italy that our writers at the best period of our literature looked for their models; to Italy that our great dramatists went for their stories; and to Italy our *dilettante* essayists love to take their readers in “studies,” “introductions,” and so on; while German, French, and English singers must Italianize their patronymics if they would attract their public. No doubt Italy has at one time or another been foremost in all the arts, and in some has reached an excellence never attained by any other country. But this is hardly the case with regard to literature. Setting aside, perhaps, Machiavelli and Ariosto, but distinctly not Tasso, we should be inclined to say that there has been for the last five hundred years no Italian author whom it would be worth while to read in a translation, except for the purpose of some special study. By the side of the French or the English stage the Italian drama looks dull and artificial; the same may almost be said of poetry; while in fiction, if we except one or two historical novels, which avowedly owe their existence to a laudable admiration of Scott, Italy is literally nowhere. The truth seems to be that the pre-eminent part which has been borne by Italy in the history of the human race gives her the right claimed with far less justice for France, of being every man’s second native land. To this must be added the influence which her physical charm has always exercised, more especially over men of Teutonic blood, and which extends itself by a process of association to her language and literature. The mere sound of

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an Italian name calls up visions "of palm, of orange blossom, of olive, aloe, and maize and vine," and white oxen of Clitumnus, and Rome, most beautiful of things. The subject is too great to be discussed here; but this or something like this is the line that such an essay as we have suggested would have to follow.

And so, from the general to the particular, we come to Miss Phillimore's praiseworthy and painstaking 'Studies.' She begins, of course, with Dante. In a short essay on the 'Paradiso' she insists on the surpassing interest (known to all students of Dante, but hidden from casual readers), of that portion of the poem, and incidentally magnifies the memory of the late Duke of Sermoneta, "Nestore dei moderni Dantisti." Like all true students of Dante also, she recognises the excellence of Cary among English translators and commentators.

The longest paper in the volume is an elaborate study of the Italian drama from the earliest times down to Alfieri and Goldoni. Nothing will ever make the ordinary reader think Italian plays anything but dull. Their tragedies are stilted, their comedies are coarse; but dull they all are, the 'Congiura dei Pazzi' and the 'Mandragola' alike. The mention of this latter reminds us to notice an interesting evidence of the change which recent works have caused in the popular estimate of Machiavelli's character. When Miss Phillimore can say that he had in writing his comedies "the practical purpose of working an improvement in the religion, and the public and private laws by which the Florence of his time was governed," we feel that he is indeed rehabilitated. It is satisfactory also to see that she has a good word for Metastasio, who is too often looked upon as a mere librettist. He would deserve a higher rank than this if he had written nothing but the lovely "L'onda dal mar divisa," which she quotes, and which alone is enough to prove that poetry was not quite extinct in Italy in the eighteenth century.

MORNING POST.—The essays which compose this volume, *Studies in Italian Literature*, have already appeared in various periodicals. Now published in book form, they constitute a synopsis of classical and modern Italian literature, characterised by earnest research, and the faculty of presenting its results in a lucid and attractive manner. Commencing her work by a study of Dante, the author has been well inspired in choosing for examination the great poet's "Paradiso." The difficulties which beset the

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comprehension of this least-known part of the "Divina Commedia" are well indicated in the following lines. "Those who attempt to read it are deterred from doing so by the allegories and metaphors which, frequently employed throughout the work, occur in almost every line of the 'Paradiso;' by the arrangement of the heavenly spheres, according to the now exploded Ptolemaical system; and, above all, by the theological and philosophical expositions which, it must be admitted, are not entirely free from the scholasticism prevalent in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries." With few exceptions, English commentators have insisted on the beauties of the "Purgatorio" and "Inferno," while they have comparatively neglected the poem which Italian critics look upon "as a foretaste of the joys of 'Il vero Paradiso.'" The writer relates at some length the labours of the late Duca di Sermoneta, whose expositions of Dante gained for him the name of the 'Nestore dei moderni Dantisti," and herself explains the allegory concealed in the "Paradiso," as well as its astronomical and other theories, with an able ingenuity that will greatly contribute to its readier comprehension. Separate chapters are devoted to Petrarch and Torquato Tasso. With regard to the latter, the author adopts the popular and romantic, but not altogether incontrovertible supposition that the misfortunes which darkened the declining years of the writer of the "Gerusalemme Liberata," are to be traced to his presumptuous passion for Leonora d'Este. One of the most interesting of these essays is entitled, "The Prince Printers of Italy." There can be no doubt that the rivalry existing between the different rulers of the various Italian States, however deplorable from the point of view of the material wellbeing of their subjects, aided nevertheless to entertain and develop the fire of Italian genius. Themselves, lovers of culture, they sought to win fame and celebrity by protecting the men of letters or the artists belonging to their Courts, and strove with each other in an intellectual emulation, the results of which redeem the otherwise dark picture offered by the Italy of Dante and Tasso. "The Pontiffs in Rome, the Medici in Florence, the Visconti, the Arragon Kings of Naples, the Houses of Gonzaga in Mantua, and of Este in Ferrara, the Dukes of Urbino—all promoted this revival of learning." No individual ruler sustained so efficaciously the cause of learning as Thomas Sarzana, who became Pope in 1447. "He founded the Vatican library, and left it at his death enriched with five thousand volumes, a treasure far exceeding that of any other collection in Europe. Every scholar who needed maintenance found it at the

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Court of Rome, and several Greek authors were translated into Latin by order of Pope of Nicholas V." To Alberto Pio, Prince of Carpi, is due the honour of heading the list of "The Prince Printers of Italy." He defrayed the expenses of the first printing press constructed in Italy by Aldo Manuzio, who may be rightly called "the father of Italian typography." The cordial character of the relations existing at that time between men of the highest rank and those whose only nobility was that of mind is well illustrated by the fact that Aldo was permitted by the prince to bear the latter's family name of "Pio," "on account of the great affection and intimacy which existed between them." Aldo Manuzio first conceived the idea of printing books in a small and convenient form. He also adopted the 8vo size, for which he had engraved the kind of type long called the "Aldine," and now the "Italic." The drama, which is so important a feature in the history of Italian literature, is treated of by the writer, from the early stage of the "Ludi," or "Mystery Plays," to those of the present day. In speaking of the comedies of the school of Goldoni, she rightly praises those of Alberta Nota (born in Turin, 1775), an author who is far from being as well appreciated as he deserves, and whose humorous and witty plays are free from the license which not seldom mars Goldoni's works. Of Manzoni and Aleardo Aleardi the author has made eloquent sketches. Another on Edoardo Fusco concludes the list of those Italians whose writings kept alive the desire of independence in the hearts of their countrymen, while the realisation of the cry, "L'Italia Una," seemed "a hopeless dream." The foregoing unavoidably cursory view of her work suffices to show that the author has brought to its accomplishment a genuine love and reverence for the treasures of Italian genius, and a conscientiousness which has led her to consult the most authenticated contemporary writers of the periods to which her book refers. It will be found a sure and pleasing guide to the study of a subject which, in the author's words, "can never cease to glow with fascinating interest."

COURT JOURNAL.—The collection of essays in this attractive volume is reprinted with additions from various magazines in which they were first published. A careful outline of the "Paradiso of Dante" occupies the first pages of the book, followed by a sketch of the "Life, Times, and Works of Petrarch," the father of Italian lyrical poetry. The life of the unfortunate Torquato Tasso is minutely recorded, together with the account of his unjust confinement for seven years in the hospital at Ferrara

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on the plea of insanity. Many other writers of eminence are mentioned in these Studies, and the book closes with the interesting legend respecting the picture of Leonardo da Vinci, his famous "Last Supper."

GUARDIAN.—Miss Catherine Phillimore has republished her fugitive essays under the title of *Studies in Italian Literature*. Dante, Petrarch, Tasso, Manzoni, Aleardi, Fusco, are all treated with loving and reverential appreciation, and much is it to be wished that this beautifully got up and gracefully written volume would revive an interest in the language and literature now too generally neglected.

SATURDAY REVIEW.—*Studies in Italian Literature*, by Catherine Mary Phillimore is a volume of essays, reprinted with additions from the reviews and magazines in which they were originally published. Their subjects are the *Paradiso* of Dante, Petrarch, Tasso, the early Italian printers, the Italian drama, Manzoni, Aleardo Aleardi, Count Arrivabene, and Edoardo Fusco, to which a short poem, founded on a legend connected with Leonardo da Vinci's "Last Supper" at Milan, is added. The essays do not make pretension to originality, but they are carefully and gracefully written.

ST. JAMES'S GAZETTE.—This is a reprint of papers which have appeared from time to time in various periodicals, and will fully repay a second perusal. First comes a sketch of the *Paradiso*, which contains yet another confirmation of the canon of Maurice—namely, that the true Dantean is known by a peculiar enthusiasm for the third part of the Divine Comedy. In this connection we are glad to see that Miss Phillimore can render justice to the admirable version of Cary, which it has been too much the fashion to disparage of late years. Studies of Petrarch and Tasso succeed; and next we have a delightful *causerie* on the "Prince Printers of Italy," and the golden age of written book which went before. The Peace Society might be tempted to regret the age when a manuscript of Livy's Annals, sent by Cosmo de' Medici to Alfonso, King of Naples, sufficed to appease a quarrel between them; though the king was counselled by his physicians to examine the gift with care lest Cosmo should have introduced poison between the leaves. The series of essays on the Italian drama give about as good an abstract of the theatrical history of a thousand years as could fairly be compressed into a hundred pages. In the opinion of the writer, the stage of modern Italy "still deserves to be recognised as playing a

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prominent part in the political and social improvement of the country." We must not forget to mention a bright little poem, on a legend of "Il Cenacolo," which serves as epilogue to much excellent prose.

THE ACADEMY.—There is much that is interesting in this close-packed volume, and much that is instructive, if not exactly entertaining. The ground covered is very wide; for not only do we get a review of Italian poetry, at its more salient points, from Dante to Manzoni and the latest developments of the modern school, but more than that, we have, in the last three essays, an excellent picture of the literary side of the Italian movement towards liberty and unity, and some capital sketches of the men who took part in that movement. The author does not claim to present much that is new. She is content to use the existing material; but this she has read and understood, and represents it in such a manner that probably few will rise from the perusal of her book without having acquired some addition to their knowledge of Italian literature.

The earlier periods of Italian poetry have received more attention from English students than its later developments. Englishmen are probably better acquainted with Dante, Petrarch, Poliziano, Ariosto, and Tasso than with Alfieri, Manzoni, Leopardi, Giusti, and Aleardi; and for this reason we welcome the later essays, which deal with writers of this century, rather than the earlier ones, which are devoted to such well-worn subjects as Dante, Petrarch, and Tasso.

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Tasso, especially, is a favourite with the author, who shares with Metastasio a preference for the author of the *Gerusalemme* over the author of the *Orlando*. We should suppose, however, that the majority of readers would endorse Tiraboschi's graceful opinion:—"If I were to choose which of these poets I should most wish to resemble in their natural gift for poetry, I should first of all beg Tasso's pardon, but I should pray Apollo to bestow on me the natural gifts of Ariosto."

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The essay on the Italian drama is followed by a short sketch of Manzoni; good in its way, and made really valuable by the translation of a letter which Manzoni wrote to an admirer who wished to defend him against his critics. For that purpose the admirer asks Manzoni to explain to him certain passages in his poems. Manzoni replies;—"You must excuse me if I

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offer no explanation of the passages which appear to you difficult ; . . . the words should speak for themselves in the first instance, and if they do not, and require explanation, they are not worth it." The whole letter is a noble statement of the great artist's position in face of literary disputes. The book closes with three spirited sketches of Aleardi, Arrivabene, and Edoardo Fusco, by far the most valuable portion of the volume, both in matter and style. If it were for these sketches alone, we should recommend Miss Phillimore's book to all lovers of Italy ; but, as will be seen from the above remarks, there is much besides to make us welcome the volume, which has clearly been a labour of love to its author.

WALFORD'S ANTIQUARIAN.—*Studies in Italian Literature.* By Catherine Mary Phillimore.—Literature was once the diversion of cultivated leisure. We will not say that it is now the business of undisciplined haste, but true it is that in these days no small proportion of the books issued bear the impress of hurry, of contract work, which, if done to the day, and serviceable to the immediate purpose in view, is expected to pass muster, without any two minute inquiry being made into the question of intrinsic value. Our authors write mostly for the innumerable, but not always discerning, public of the hour, and it is enough if that be satisfied. We can hardly realise the intense desire for lasting glory which urged and controlled the old writers of the greater kind—the craving after fame—

“ Sanza la qual chi sua vita consuma

Cotal vestigio in terra di se lascia

Qual fumo in aere od in acqua la schiùma.”

Those, on the other hand, who could not hope to conquer the applause of posterity, wrote mainly to please themselves, wrote leisurely out of the fulness of some literary affection, because the companionship of their books became a more living thing when the conversation was not, as it were, all on one side, when the student set himself to render precise, and to express lucidly, his own musings, as well as to understand and to assimilate the thoughts of others. The book before us has a pleasant suggestiveness of having been written somewhat in this old way. It is plain that the writer has long breathed “the quiet and still air of delightful studies,” and her enjoyment of her subject is the better communicated to the reader because it is manifestly by no means a dress put on for his edification. Hence a refreshing sense of repose and sincerity pervades the whole volume. After a very clear, though brief, sketch of the general plan of the “Paradiso”—

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based in part on the labours of that great Dante scholar, the blind Duke of Sermoneta, to whose honoured memory the book is dedicated—the author follows the main incidents in the lives of Petrarch and Tasso, and contrives to say in a small space as much as need be known by those who are beginning to study the works of the two poets. The subject of the first-placed of the two essays is almost endless: Petrarch in his various aspects, as poet, as politician, as the first and the most intellectual of those who took part in the revival of Letters, affords a theme which is practically inexhaustible. Miss Phillimore dwells on what is often forgotten, namely, that the Italian poems, which have secured him immortality, were by him regarded as of relatively little consequence; and this judgment, strangely mistaken though it was, it is still well to remember, because it indicates also the true place occupied by the whole episode of Laura de Sade in the poet's life. His love for Laura, although it concentrated on one high ideal the emotional forces in his nature, which otherwise would probably have continued to be distributed among less worthy objects, yet did not at any period engross an intellect which, like that of many great Italians of the same age, was especially characterised by an extraordinary breadth and comprehensiveness. It was, in some respects, an easier task to give the outline of Tasso's troubled career; one of the saddest that ever fell to poet's lot, his misfortunes, though differing in kind, making another point of affinity between him and our own sweet singer, Edmund Spenser. Italian critics are of opinion that the results of the most recent researches go towards exculpating Alfonso d' Este from some of the charges brought against him, but Tasso's imprisonment remains a dark blot on his memory, extenuate it how we may. Perhaps the essays which will have most attraction for antiquarians are those devoted to "the Prince Printers of Italy." Here we have once more discussed the ever-fascinating topic of the alliance between the brilliant rulers of the various Italian States and the men of genius in divers walks who transformed and renewed the world of art and letters. There is, indeed, the reverse of the medal—the hideous record of crime, and yet worse, if worse be possible, the moral corruption which, in the most splendid epoch, had begun already to sow the seeds of national decline. Miss Phillimore leaves all this alone, and she has a perfect right to do so, for the essayist has a freedom of choice which the historian dare not claim. Nothing can be more engaging than the story of the friendship of Alberto Pio, Prince of Carpi, and the eldest of the Aldines, father of Italian typography—he who substituted the pretty



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8vo editions for the heavy folios hitherto only in use, and who invented the type we call "Italic," in order to combine the utmost clearness with economy of space. It adds one more charm to this romance,—a beautiful romance of reality, which young people might read with much more advantage than the "realistic" novel—that the first *italics* were copied from the manuscript of Petrarch's sonnets. The exquisite caligraphy of all the old Italian poets and writers, which may be abundantly seen and done homage to in the British Museum, is in itself a reproof to contemporary authors, some of whom seem to be convinced that a bad handwriting is a sign of genius, while others, like the late Dean Stanley, become, from a wilfully cultivated habit, incapable of setting down their ideas except in hieroglyphics. In close connection with the lives of the first great Italian printers stands the bursting forth of the passion for collecting and rediscovering the hidden stores of classical lore, and this likewise is well described in Miss Phillimore's pages. The recent historical revivals in Italy of the comedies of the sixteenth century lend a special interest to the essays on the Italian drama. The remaining papers deal with some of those modern Italians who, in one way or another, have promoted the unity and independence of their country. Unlike many of her countrymen, who find the new state of things less picturesque than the old, Miss Phillimore is a warm adherent of free Italy. Of the poet and patriot, Aleardo Aleardi, she writes with particular sympathy. Four lines of his (from a poem addressed to his little iron bedstead) have been, she tells us, translated into German by Prince Bismarck. As she gives no English rendering of them, we have attempted one :—

" The day will come when 'neath thy covering white,  
O bed, wherein to die at last I hope,  
I shall my tirèd eyes upon the light  
Serenely close, in God again to ope."

NEW YORK.—LITERARY WORLD.—*Studies in Italian Literature.* By Catherine Mary Phillimore. The author of this attractively-printed volume is an enthusiastic lover of the best Italian literature, and while she pretends to offer no original ideas upon the various authors discussed, she draws her information from critical sources, and presents it without that base alloy of meaningless qualification which so many writers of lesser intellectual calibre find essential to their purpose. The vindication of the "Paradiso

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as the glorious culmination of the *Divina Commedia*, and the exposition of its allegorical form, as made in the opening essay, is a thoughtful and reverent tribute to the genius of Dante that ought not to be without influence. Miss Phillimore considers also the growth of the Italian drama, offers an historical review of the work of the prince printers of Italy, and sketches briefly the lives and work of Petrarch, Tasso, and Manzoni. The versified translations, of which there are many, are of distinct merit.

THE WESTERN MORNING NEWS.—*Studies in Italian Literature.*—This daintily-bound volume is a reprint of a dozen sketches contributed to various reviews and magazines. Among the famous men of the Italian world of letters dealt with are Petrarch, Tasso, Manzoni, Aleardo Aleardi, Count Arrivabene, Edoardo Fusco. Interesting and lengthened articles on the Prince Printers of Italy and the Italian Drama are given. The "Paradiso" of Dante is also touched upon. The stories of the great classical poets of Italian song are told with power and ability, and those who read them will feel urged on to revel in the rich treasure of glorious poems of the Southern sunny land. A finely-written original poem, "A Legend of 'Il Cenacolo'" concludes the book.







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